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THE
FEAST OF THE POETS,

&c.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF

CHARLES THE FIRST

BY

JOHN BURNET

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Printed by C. H. Reynell, 21, Piccadilly.

1704

Printed by C. H. Reynell, 21, Piccadilly.

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THE
FEAST OF THE POETS,
WITH NOTES,
AND
OTHER PIECES IN VERSE,
BY
LEIGH HUNT.

Οιον 'ο τω ' πολλωνος εστισατο δαφνινος 'ορπηξ
Οια δ' ολον το μελαθρον' εκας, εκας, οστις αλιτρος,
Και δε πυ τα θυρετρα καλω ποδι Φοιβος αρασσει.

CALLIMACHUS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR GALE, CURTIS, AND FENNER,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1815.

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ROY W. B.
J. J. B.
Y. B. B.

DEDICATION.

TO THOMAS MITCHELL, ESQ.

Late Fellow of Sydney College, Cambridge.

MY DEAR MITCHELL,

ALLOW me to surprise you with a Dedication. It is not quite so disinterested a one as you may imagine, for it is a cheap way of paying my debts for many an hour of enjoyment in health, and refreshment in sickness; and besides, I wish to shew that alarming body of people, called "*some persons*," that the most unaccommodating

politician need not absolutely want friends, and warm ones, even among those who have minds of their own. You and I differ upon more than one point of importance, public as well as private; but on the subject of poetry, with some little exception perhaps as to your old friend Ben Jonson, we are generally agreed; and no two persons can be more firmly persuaded, that there is but one thing happier than friendship, and nothing better than principle.

Your's most sincerely,

LEIGH HUNT.

SURREY JAIL,
January 10th, 1814.

PREFACE.

As the following little piece, which was first published in a magazine* privately set up and not enjoying the usual means of continuance, attracted a degree of attention which was thought to promise still more for it if presented to the public in a different manner, the author has been induced to give it such revision and enlargement, as may strengthen, perhaps, its claims on their good opinion. For this purpose he has considerably increased the text, and ad-

* The Reflector.

ded almost the whole of the present notes. The latter, it is true, after all, are rather results of criticism, than criticism itself; and the smallness of the poem perhaps hardly warranted even this; but he was anxious to shew that he had at least considered the subjects of which he talked, and was particularly desirous of doing justice to a great living poet, of whom, in the first instance, led away by the impatience of seeing him pervert his genius, he had suffered himself to speak with unqualified and therefore unbecoming distaste.

What praise or censure he may have bestowed on any one, has at least the merit of being sincere. He has many warm feelings upon every subject of public concern, poetical as well as political; but none, he trusts, of an ill-tempered, still less of a

personal nature*, and least of all, if possible, towards such persons as might be supposed the most to have excited them. For some of these persons, who are men of

* It is an unpleasant thing for an author to batle the humour of one of his passages. For the modern dramatists, as a body, it is almost needless in the present writer to express his contempt; and some of them, even as men, deserve to be handled with little ceremony for their fopperies or vulgarities. But a line has escaped him respecting one of them, for which he is sorry, both on account of the general character of the individual, and the nature of the allusion, which involves a personality not warrantable by any circumstances but those of coxcomical pretension, or gross origin. It is the first of the kind, he believes, that ever came from his pen. Mr. Cobb however, though not a good dramatist, is said to be a sensible and good-tempered man, and has probably thought nothing about the passage, or felt more for the writer than for himself in seeing it. —Should the publication go to press a second time, it shall be altered.

virtue as well as ability, he has all the respect which their own eccentricities will allow; and for others, who have neither ability nor virtue, his pity stands in the place of a higher feeling, and he can forgive to their common nature as men, what he must not overlook in their example as characters.—This however is deviating into politics.

Like most of the poetical inventions of modern times, the idea of Apollo's holding sessions and elections is of Italian origin; but having been treated in it's most ordinary light, with the degradation of the God into a mere critic or chairman, it has hitherto received none of those touches of painting, and combinations of the familiar and fanciful, of which it appears so provocative, and which the present trifle is an

attempt to supply. The pieces it has already produced in our language, are the Session of the Poets, by Sir John Suckling; another Session, by an anonymous author, in the first volume of State Poems; the Trial for the Bays, by Lord Rochester; and the Election of a Poet Laureat, by Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham. They are for the most part vulgar and poor, with that strange affectation of slovenliness, which the lower species of satire, in those times, appears to have mistaken for a vigorous negligence or gallant undress.

But the author is getting on his critical ground again, and forgets that he must now be regarded as having entered his own road of pretension, and be criticised as a poet himself. The necessity is rather perplexing to one who has been making so

free with others, and who scarcely considers himself as having finished his own studies in poetry; but as it is,—he has subjoined to the Feast of the Poets a few little pieces of a graver description, in order that those, who in return for being lightly regarded, are eager to make accusations of levity, may see that he has at least a taste for more serious enjoyment.

Should a state of health, not very accommodating, continue to allow him in his imprisonment the use of his pen, it is his intention, by the beginning of next year, to bring out a piece of some length, with which he is varying less agreeable studies, and in which he would attempt to reduce to practice his own ideas of what is natural in style, and of the various and legitimate harmony of the English heroic.

[illegible]

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THE
FEAST OF THE POETS.

T'OTHER day, as Apollo set pitching his darts
Through the clouds of November, by fits and by starts,
He began to consider how long it had been,
Sinte the bards of Old England had all been rung in.
'I think,' said the God, recollecting, (and then
He fell twiddling a sunbeam as I may my pen),
'I think—let me see—yes, it is, I declare,
As long ago now as that Buckingham there:¹
And yet I can't see why I've been so remiss,
Unless it may be—and it certainly is,
That since Dryden's fine verses and Milton's sublime,
I have fairly been sick of their sing-song and rhyme.

There was Collins, 'tis true, had a good deal to say,
 But the rogue had no industry,—neither had Gray:
 And Thomson, though best in his indolent fits,
 Either slept himself weary, or bloated his wits.²
 But ever since Pope spoil'd the ears of the town,
 With his cuckoo-song verses, half up and half down,
 There has been such a doling and sameness,—by Jove,
 I'd as soon have gone down to see Kemble in love.³
 However, of late as they've rous'd them anew,
 I'll e'en go and give them a lesson or two,
 And as nothing's done there now-a-days without eating,
 See what kind of set I can muster worth treating.
 So saying, the God bade his horses walk for'ard,
 And leaving them, took a long dive to the north;
 For Gordon's he made; and as Gods who drop in do,
 Came smack on his legs through the drawing-room window.
 And here I could tell, if it was'nt for stopping,
 How all the town shook as the godhead went pop in,
 How bright look'd the poets, and brisk blew the airs,
 And the laurels took flow'r in the gardens and squares;
 But fancies like these, though I've stores to supply me
 I'd better keep back for a poem I've by me.

And merely observe that the girls look'd divine,
And the old folks in-doors exclaimed ' Bless us how fine !'

Apollo, arriv'd, had no sooner embodied
His essence ethereal, than quenching his godhead,
He chang'd his appearance—to—what shall I say?
To a gallant young soldier returning in May?
No—that's a resemblance too vapid and low:—
Let's see—to a finished young traveller?—No:
To a graceful young lord just stept out of his carriage?
Or handsome young poet, the day of his marriage?
No,—nobody's likeness will help me, I see,
To afford you a notion of what he could be,
Not though I collected one pattern victorious
Of all that was good, and accomplish'd, and glorious,
From deeds in the daylight, or books on the shelf,
And call'd up the shape of young Alfred himself.

Imagine however, if shape there must be,
A figure sublim'd above mortal degree,
His limbs the perfection of elegant strength,—
A fine flowing roundness inclining to length,—
A back dropping in,—an expansion of chest,
(For the God, you'll observe, like his statues was dress'd.)

THE FEAST OF

His throat like a pillar for smoothness and grace,
 His curls in a cluster,—and then such a face,
 As mark'd him at once the true offspring of Jove,
 The brow all of wisdom, and lips all of love;
 For though he was blooming, and oval of cheek,
 And youth down his shoulders went smoothing and sleek,
 Yet his look with the reach of past ages was wise,
 And the soul of eternity thought through his eyes.

I would not say more, lest my climax should lose;
 Yet now I have mention'd those lamps of the Muse,
 I can't but observe what a splendour they shed,
 When a thought more than common came into his head
 Then they leap'd in their frankness, deliciously bright
 And shot round about them an arrowy light;
 And if, as he shook back his hair in it's cluster,
 A curl fell athwart them and darken'd their lustre,
 A sprinkle of gold through the duskiness came,
 Like the sun through a tree, when he's setting in flame.

The God then no sooner had taken a chair,
 And rung for the landlord to order the fare,
 Than he heard a strange noise and a knock from without
 And scraping and bowing, came in such a rout!

There was Arnold, and Reynolds, and Dibdin, and Cherry,
 All grinning as who should say, 'Shan't we be merry?'
 And mighty dull Cobb, lumbering just like a bear up,
 And sweet Billy Dimond, a patting his hair up.
 The God, for an instant, sat fix'd as a stone,
 Till recover'ing, he said in a good-natur'd tone,
 'Oh, the waiters, I see;—ah, it's all very well,—
 Only one of you'll do just to answer the bell.'
 But lord! to see all the great dramatists' faces!
 They looked at each other, and made such grimaces!
 Then turning about, left the room in vexation,
 And Hook, they say, could'nt help mutt'ring 'Damnation!'
 'Twas lucky for Colman he was'nt there too,
 For his pranks would have certainly met with their due,
 And Sheridan's also, that finished old tricker;—
 But one was in prison, and both were in liquor.

The God fell a laughing to see his mistake,
 But stopp'd with a sigh for poor Comedy's sake;
 Then gave mine host orders, who bow'd to the floor,
 And presented three cards that were brought to the door:
 Apollo just gave them a glance with his eye
 'Spencer—Rogers—Montgomery,—and putting them by,

Begg'd the landlord to give his respects to all three,
And say he'd be happy to see them to tea.⁶

'Your Majesty then,' said the Galus, 'don't know
That a person nam'd Crabbe has been waiting below!
He has taken his chair in the kitchen, they say.'
'Indeed!' said Apollo, 'Oh pray let him stay:
We'll be much better pleased to be with 'em down stai
And will find ye all out with your cookings and cares:—
But mind that you treat him as well as you're able,
And let him have part of what goes from the table.'⁷

A soft, smiling voice then arose on the ear,
As if some one from court was about to appear:—
'Oh, this is the room, my good friend? Ah I see it is;
Room, sure enough, for the best-bred of deities!
Then came a whisper,—and then was a hush,—
And then, with a sort of a look of a blush,
Came in Mr. Hayley, all polish'd confusion,
And said, 'Will Apollo excuse this intrusion?
I might have kept back,—but I thought 'twould look odd,
And friendship, you know,—pray how is my dear God
A smile, followed up by a shake of the head,
Cross'd the fine lip of Phœbus, who view'd him, and said

THE POETS.

I'll give you a lesson, Sir, quite your own seeking,
And one that you very much want, — on plain speaking.
Pray have you to learn, — and at this time of day,
That your views on regard have been all the wrong way?
One ten thousandth part of the words and the time
That you've wasted on praises instead of your rhyme,
Might have gained you a title to this kind of freedom;
But volumes of endings, lugg'd in as you need 'em,
Of hearts and imparts, where's the soul that can read 'em?^a
So saying, his eye so alarmingly shone,
That ere it could wink, the poor devil was gone.

A hem was then heard, consequential and snapping,
And a sour little gentleman walk'd with a rap in.
He bow'd, look'd about him, seem'd cold, and sat down,
And said, ' I'm surpris'd that you'll visit this town : —
To be sure, there are one or two of us who know you,
But as for the rest, they are all much below you,
So stupid, in gen'ral, the natives are grown,
They really prefer Scotch reviews to their own ;
So that what with their taste, their reformers, and stuff,
They have sicken'd myself and my friends long enough.

' Yourself and your friends!' cried the God in high places,
 ' And pray, my frank visitor, who may you be?'
 ' Who be?' cried the other; ' why really—this tone—
 William Gifford's a name, I think, pretty well-known!'
 ' Oh—now I remember,' said Phoebus; ' an true—
 My thanks to that name are undoubtedly due:
 The rod, that got rid of the Cruscas and Lauras,
 That plague of the butterflies,—sav'd me the horror;
 The Juvenal too stops a gap in one's shelf;
 At least in what Dryden has not done himself;
 And there's something, which even distaste must respect
 In the self-taught example, that conquer'd neglect;
 But not to insist on the recommendations
 Of modesty, wit, and a small stock of patience,
 My visit just now is to poets alone,
 And not to small critics, however well known.
 So saying he rang, to leave nothing in doubt,
 And the sour little gentleman blest'd himself out.

Next came Walter Scott with a fine weighty face,
 For as soon as his visage was seen in the place,
 The diners and barmaids all crowded to know him,
 And thank him with smiles for that sweet pretty poem.

overest, but scarcely had got through the door, when he look'd adoration, and bow'd to the floor, for his host was a God,—what a very great thing! and what was still greater in his eyes,—a King!!! Apollo smil'd shrewdly, and bade him sit down. With 'Well, Mr. Scott, you have manag'd the toga; low pray, copy less,—have a little temperity,—Try, if you can't also manage posterity. —All you add now only lessens your credit, and how could you think too of taking to edit? A great deal's cutur'd, where there's measure and rhyme; but prose such as your's is a pure waste of time,—A singer of ballads unstrung by a cough, Who fairly talks us, till his hearers walk off. Be original, man; study more; scribble less; Nor mistake present favour for lasting success; And remember, if laurels are what you would sing, The crown of all triumphs is freedom of tongue.

'And here,' cried Apollo, 'is one at the door, Who shall prove what I say, or any art is no more. Ah, Campbell, you're welcome to—well, how have you been? Since the last time I saw you on Spedding's green.

I need not ask after the plans you've in view;
 'Twould be odd, I believe, if I had'nt them too:
 But there's one thing I've always forgotten to mention,—
 Your versification,—pray give it invention.
 A fancy like your's, that can play it's own part,
 And clip with fine fingers the chords of the heart,
 Should draw from itself the whole charm of it's song,
 Nor put up with notes, that to others belong.'¹²

The poet to this was about to reply,
 When Moore, coming in, caught the Deity's eye,
 Who gave him his hand, and said, 'Shew me a sight
 That can give a divinity sounder delight,
 Or that earth should more prize from it's core to the poles
 Than the self-improved morals of elegant souls.
 Repentant I speak it,—though when I was wild,
 My friends should remember the world was a child,—
 That customs were diff'rent, and young people's eyes,
 Had no better examples than those in the skies.
 But soon as I learnt how to value these doings,
 I never much valued your billings and cooings;
 They only make idle the best of my race;
 And since my poor Daphne turned tree in my face,

- There are very few poets, whose caps or whose cuffs
Have obtained such a laurel by hunting the girls.
- So it gives me, dear Tom, a delight beyond measure,
To find how you've mended your notions of pleasure;
For never was poet, whose fanciful hours
Could bask in a richer abstraction of bowers,
With sounds and with spirits, of charm to detain
The wonder-eyed soul in their magic domain;
And never should poet, so gifted and rare,
Pollute the bright Eden Jove gives to his care,
But love the fair Virtue, for whom it is given,
And keep the spot pure for the visits of heaven.
- He spoke with a warmth, but his accent was bland,
And the poet bow'd down with a blush to his hand,
When all on a sudden, there rose on the stairs
A noise as of persons with singular airs;
You'd have thought 'twas the Bishops or Judges a coming,
Or whole-court of Aldermen hawing and humming,
Or Abbot, at least, with his ushers before,
But 'twas only Bob Sonthley and two or three more.
As soon as he saw him, Apollo seem'd pleas'd;
But as he had settled it not to be teas'd

By all the vain dreamers from bed-room and brook,
 He turn'd from the rest without even a look;
 For Coleridge had vex'd him long since, I suppose,
 By his idling, and gabbling, and muddling in prose;
 And Wordsworth, one day, made his very hairs bristle,
 By going and changing his harp for a whistle.
 These heroes however, long used to attack,
 Were not by contempt to be so driven back,
 But follow'd the God up, and shifting their place,
 Stood full in his presence, and look'd in his face;
 When one began spouting the cream of orations
 In praise of bombarding one's friends and relations,
 And t'other some lines he had made on a straw,
 Shewing how he had found it, and what it was for,
 And how, when 'twas balanc'd, it stood like a spell!
 And how, when 'twas balanc'd no longer, it fell!
 A wild thing of scorn he describ'd it to be,
 But he said it was patient to heaven's decree!
 Then he gaz'd upon nothing, and looking forlorn,
 Dropt a natural tear for that wild thing of scorn!
 Apollo half laugh'd betwixt anger and mirth,
 And cried, "Was there ever such trifling on earth?"

It is not enough that this nonsense, I fear,
 Has hurt the fine head of my friend Robert here,
 But the very best promise bred up in the school,
 Must shew himself proudest in playing the fool.
 What! think ye a bard's a mere gossip, who tells
 Of the ev'ry-day feelings of every one else,
 And that poetry lies, not in something select,
 But in gath'ring the refuse that others reject?
 Must a ballad doled out by a spectacled nurse
 About Two-Shoes or Thumb, be your model of verse;
 And your writings, instead of sound fancy and style,
 Look more like the morbid abstractions of bile?
 There is one of you here,—'twas of him that I spoke,—
 Who, instead of becoming a byword and joke,
 Should have brought back our fine old pre-eminent way,
 And been the first man at my table to day:
 But resolv'd as I am to maintain the partitions
 'Twixt wit and mere wildness, he knows the conditions,
 And if he retains but a spark of my fire,
 Will shew it this instant,—and blush,—and retire.
 He spoke; and poor Wordsworth, his cheeks in a glow,
 (For he felt the God in him) made symptoms to go.

When Apollo, in pity, to screen him from sight,
 Threw round him a cloud that was purple and white;
 The same that of old us'd to wrap his own shoulders,
 When coming from heaven, he'd spare the beholders—
 The bard, like a second Æneas, went home in't,
 And lives underneath it, it seems, at this moment.²⁰

Apollo then turning and smoothing his frown,
 Bade Southey take warning, and let him sit down;
 But the rest of Bob's friends, too ambitious to flinch,
 Stood fixing their faces, and stirred not an inch;
 While Sam, looking soft and politely dejected,
 Confess'd with a sigh, that 'twas what he expected,
 Since Phœbus had fatally learnt to confide in
 Such prozers as Johnson, and rhymers as Dryden.
 But wrath seiz'd Apollo;—and turning again,
 'Whatever,' he cried, 'were the faults of such men,
 Ye shall try, wretched mortals, how well ye can bear
 What Dryden has witness'd, unsote with despair.'²¹

He said; and the place all seem'd swelling with light
 While his locks and his visage grew awfully bright;
 And clouds, burning inward, roll'd round on each side,
 To encircle his state, as he stood in his pride;

Till at last the full Deity put on his rays,
And burst on the sight in the pomp of his blaze!
Then a glory beam'd round, as of fiery rods,
With the sound of deep organs and chorister gods;
And the faces of bards, glowing fresh from their skies,
Came thronging about with intentness of eyes,—
And the Nine were all heard, as the harmony swell'd,—
And the spheres, pealing in, the long rapture upheld,—
And all things, above, and beneath, and around,
Seem'd a world of bright vision, set floating in sound.

That sight and that music might not be sustain'd
But by those who a glory like Dryden's had gain'd;²²
And even the four who had graciousness found,
After gazing awhile, bow'd them down to the ground.
What then could remain for that feeble-eyed crew?
Through the door in an instant they rush'd and they flew,
They rush'd, and they dash'd, and they scrambled, and
stumbled,
And down the hall staircase distractedly tumbled,
And never once thought which was head or was feet,
And slid through the hall, and fell plump in the street.

²² "The Poets" and "The Poets" on the same and different of

So great was the panic they struck with their fright,
That of all who had come to be feasted that night,
Not one ventur'd up, or would stay near the place;
Even Croker declin'd, notwithstanding his face;
And old Peter Pindar turn'd pale, and suppress'd,
With a death-bed sensation, a blasphemous jest.¹¹

But Phoebus no sooner had gain'd his good ends,
Than he put off his terrors, and rais'd up his friend
Who stood for a moment, entranc'd to behold
The glories subside and the dim-rolling gold,
And listen'd to sounds, that with ecstasy burning
Seem'd dying far upward, like heaven returning.
Then 'Come,' cried the God in his elegant mirth,
'Let us make us a heav'n of our own upon earth,
And wake with the lips, that we dip in our bowls,
That divinest of music,—congenial souls.'

So saying, he led through the dining-room door,
And seating the poets, cried 'Laurels for four!'
No sooner demanded, than lo! they were there,
And each of the bards had a wreath in his hair.
Tom Campbell's with willow and poplar was twin'd
And Southey's with mountain-ash pluck'd in the wi

THE POETS.

And Scott's with a heath from his old garden stores,
 And with fine leaves and Jump-up-and-kiss-me, Tom
 Moore's.
 Then Apollo put his on, that sparkled with beams,
 And rich rose the feast as an epicure's dreams,
 Not epicure's taste, or grossly inclin'd,
 But such as a poet might dream ere he din'd;
 For the God had no sooner determin'd the fare,
 Than it turn'd to whatever was racy and rare:
 The fish and the flesh, for example, were done,
 On account of their fineness, in flame from the sun;
 The wines were all nectar of different smack,
 To which Muskat was nothing, nor Virginis Lac,
 No, nor Lachryma Christi, though clearly divine,
 Nor Montepulciano, though King of all Wine.
 Then as for the fruits, you might garden for ages,
 Before you could raise me such apples and gages;
 And all on the table no sooner were spread,
 Than their cheeks next the God blush'd a beautiful red.
 'Twas magic, in short, and deliciousness all;—
 The very men-servants grew handsome and tall,

To velvet-hung ivory the furniture turn'd,
 The service with opal and adamant burn'd,
 Each candlestick chang'd to a pillar of gold,
 While a bundle of beams took the place of the mould,
 The decanters and glasses pure diamond became,
 And the corkscrew ran solidly round into flame.
 In a word, so completely forestall'd were the wishes,
 Ev'n harmony struck from the noise of the dishes.

It can't be suppos'd I should think of repeating
 The fancies that flow'd at this laureat meeting;
 I haven't the brains, and besides, was not there;
 But the wit may be easily guess'd, by the chair:
 Suffice it to say, it was keen as could be,
 Though it soften'd to prettiness rather at tea.

I must mention, however, that during the wine,
 The mem'ry of Shakspeare was toasted with mine;
 When lo, as each poet was lifting his cup,
 A strain of invisible music struck up:—
 'Twas a mixture of all the most exquisite sounds
 To be heard upon earthly or fanciful grounds,
 When pomps or when passions their coming declare,
 Or there's something at work in the moonshiny air;

For the trumpet sprang out, with a fierce-flowing blast,
And the hautboys lamentingly mingled, and pass'd,
Till a smile-drawing sweetness stole in at the close
With the breathing of flutes and the smoothing of bows,
And Ariel was heard, singing thinly and soft,
Then with tricksy tenuity vanish'd aloft.
The next name was Milton, and six was the shout,
When bursting at once in it's mightiness out,
The organ came gath'ring and rolling its thunder;
Yet wanted not intervals, calmer of wonder,
Nor stops of low sweetness, like winds when they fall,
Nor voices Elysian, that came with a call.
Then follow'd my Spenser, with five to his share,
And the light-neighing trumpet leap'd freshly on air,
With preludes of flutes as to open a scene,
And pipes with coy snatches that started between;
Till sudden it stopp'd,—and you heard a dim strain,
Like the shell of old Triton far over the main.

'Twould be tedious to count all the names as they rose,
 But none were omitted, you'll easily suppose,
 Whom Fancy has crown'd with one twig of the bay,
 From old father Chaucer to Collins and Gray.

I must'nt forget though, that Bob, like a gander,
Would give "a great genius,"—one Mr. Lander ;²
And Walter look'd up too, and begg'd to propose
A particular friend of his,—one Mr. Rose :^{2,7}

But the God look'd at Southey, and shrugging his shoulder
Cried, ' When, my good friend, will you try to grow older
Then nodding to Scott, he said, ' Pray be as portly
And rich as you please, but a little less courtly.'

So, changing the subject, he call'd upon Moore,
Who sung such a song, that they shouted ' Encore !
And the God was so pleas'd with his taste and his tone
He obey'd the next call, and gave one of his own,—
At which you'd have thought,—('twas so witching a waltz
The guests had all turn'd into listening marble ;
The wreaths on their temples grew brighter of bloom
As the breath of the Deity circled the room ;
And the wine in the glasses went rippling in rounds,
As if follow'd and fann'd by the soft-winged sounds.

Thus chatting and singing they sat till eleven,
When Phoebus shook hands, and departed for heaven
' For poets,' he said, ' who would cherish their power
And hop'd to be deathless, must keep to good hours.

So off he betook him the way that he came,
And shot up the north, like an arrow of flame;
For the Bear was his inn ; and the comet, they say,
Was his tandem in waiting to fetch him away.

The others then parted, all highly delighted ;
And so shall I be, when you find me invited.

NOTES
ON THE
FEAST OF THE POETS.

*I think—let me see—yes, it is, I declare,
As long ago now as that Buckingham there.*

SHEFFIELD, Duke of Buckinghamshire, one of the licentious dabblers in wit, who were educated in the court of Charles the Second. It would have appeared a great piece of insolence to this flimsy personage, who in a posthumous edition of his works is recommended to the care of "Time, Truth, and Posterity," to be told, that at the distance of a hundred years, it would be necessary to say who he was. His Grace, it is true, by favour of long standing, and of the

carelessness or ignorance of compilers, still his place in those strange medleys of good and called collections of the English Poets ; but very persons know any thing of him ; and they who will hardly object to the tone of contempt with which Apollo speaks of a grave coxcomb, who affects care nothing for the honours of either literature or the world, when he was evidently ambitious of it. In his election of a Poet Laureat, where I Prior, and others, are among the candidates, he modestly introduces himself:—

When Buckingham came, he scarce car'd to be seer
Till Phœbus desir'd his old friend to walk in ;
But a laureat peer had never been known,
The commoners claim'd that place as their own.

Yet if the kind God had been ne'er so inclined
To break an old rule, yet he well knew his mind,
Who of such preferment would only make sport,
And laugh'd at all suitors for places at court.

I may here, by the way, take notice of a strange piece of carelessness, which has escaped Mr. W Scott in his edition of Dryden, and which, unless he had made eighteen volumes of it, might be constant.

into an ignorance of his author;—at least, it does not exhibit to advantage his familiarity with the poets either of that age or the succeeding one. As an additional argument to prove, that Dryden had no hand in Buckingham's vulgar Essay on Satire, he asks in a note on that passage

To tell men freely of their foulest faults,
To laugh at their vain deeds and vainer thoughts,

“ Would Dryden have pardoned such a rhyme?”

It would appear so, for he used it repeatedly himself. Not to multiply instances, see the 2d part of the Conquest of Grenada, Act 2. Sc. 1.—Act 3. Sc. 1.—and Act 5. Sc. 2,—three times in one play. It was also used after him by Pope, Swift, and others, who affected to be conscientious rhymers; and in fact, there was nothing in it to startle them; for it appears by Johnson's Dictionary, that as late as fifty years back, the *l* in *fault* was not only dropt or retained at pleasure, but that “ in conversation it was *generally* suppressed.” It is curious, that one of the authorities, in which this pronunciation is exemplified, should be another passage from Dryden.

*"And Thomson, though best in his indolent fits,
Either slept himself weary, or bloated his wits."*

In thinking it necessary to explain this passage, I only wish to deprecate all idea of disrespect to the memory of Thomson,—a man of a most cordial nature as well as of genius. The "bloated his wits" alludes to the redundant and tumid character of much of his principal poem, and the "slept himself weary" to his *Castle of Indolence*, which certainly falls off towards the conclusion, though it is exquisite for the most part, particularly in the outset. I would rather take my idea of Thomson as a poet from this little production than from all the rest of his works put together. There is more of invention in it,—more of unassisted fancy and abstract enjoyment, and in copying the simplicity together with the quaintnesses of a great poet, he became more natural, and really touched his subject with a more original freshness, than when he had his style to himself.

*But ever since Pope spoil'd the ears of the town
With his cuckoo-song verses, half up and half down, &c.*

The charge against Pope of a monotonous and cloying versification is not new; but his successors have found the style of too easy and accommodating a description to part with it; and readers in general, it must be confessed, have more than acquiesced in their want of ambition. The late Dr. Darwin, whose notion of poetical music, in common with that of Goldsmith and others, was of the school of Pope, though his taste was otherwise different, was perhaps the first, who by carrying it to its extreme pitch of sameness, and ringing it affectedly in one's ears, gave the public at large a suspicion that there was something wrong in its nature. But of those who saw its deficiencies, part had the ambition without the taste or attention requisite for striking into a better path, and became eccentric in another extreme; while others, who saw the folly of both, were content to keep the beaten track and set a proper example to neither. By these appeals, how-

ever, the public ear has been excited to expect something better; and perhaps there never was more favourable time than the present, for attempt to bring back the real harmonies of English heroic, and to restore to it half the principle of its music,—variety.

I am not here joining the cry of those, who affect to consider Pope as no poet at all. He is, I confess in my judgment, at a good distance from Dryden and at an immeasurable one from such men as Spenser and Milton; but if the author of the Rape of the Lock, of Eloisa to Abelard, and of the Epistle on an Unfortunate Lady, is no poet, then are fancy and feeling no properties belonging to poetry. I am only considering his versification; and upon that point I do not hesitate to say, that I regard him, not only as no master of his art, but as a very indifferent practiser, and one whose reputation grew less and less, in proportion as the lovers of poetry become intimate with his great predecessors and with the principles of musical beauty in general. Johnson, it is true, objects to those who judge

Pope's versification "by principles rather than perception," treating the accusation against him as a cant, and suspecting that the accusers themselves "would have less pleasure in his works, if he had tried to relieve attention by studied discords, and affected to break his lines and vary his pauses." It is dangerous to hazard conclusions with regard to the opinions of others, upon matters of which our own senses have but imperfectly informed us. Johnson, by his own confession, had no ear; and on this subject, as well as graver ones, might be inclined to resent opinions, which interfered with his self-love, or disturbed the preconceived notions upon which he had rested himself. Without dwelling therefore upon the praises which he has elsewhere bestowed upon these very varieties, and which we may reasonably suspect him of having pronounced upon the strength of the rule which he treats so contemptuously,* it ought to be recollected, that the

* See particularly the life of Dryden, where he praises that excellent versifier for knowing how "to vary his pauses and adjust his accents;" and observes, that as "the essence of verse is regularity," so "its ornament is variety."

principles of an art are nothing but the results of a general agreement, to which the finest perceptions have come respecting it; and that the taste, which could be content to do without variety in music or painting, would be thought very unfurnished for criticism upon it, either on the score of principle or perception.

The truth is, that perception has had nothing to do with the matter. The public ear was lulled into a want of thought on the subject; the words *music* and *harmony* came to be tossed about with an utter forgetfulness of their meaning; and so contented and uninquisitive had every body become on this head, that even those who sat down for the express purpose of calling Mr. Pope's admirers to a proper and smaller sense of his merits as a poet, were nevertheless equally agreed, that as a versifier his pre-eminence was not to be touched*. It was the

* See the Essay of Joseph Warton on his Genius and Writings. The Doctor seems to have had the same notion of poetic harmony as his brother Thomas, who thought that Milton, "notwithstanding his singular skill in music," had "a very bad ear," and of whose beau ideal in versification

same indeed all over Europe. Voltaire, who agreeably to the genius of the French stage discovered

may here give an amusing instance. In the third book of the *Faerie Queene*, Canto 1. St. 14., is the following passage:—

At length they came into a forest wyde,
Whose hideous horror and sad trembling sound
Full griesly seem'd:—therein they long did ryde,
Yet tract of living creature none they found,
Save beares, lyons, and buls, which romed them around.

This last verse, says Warton, “would be improved, in it's harmony by reading,

Save lyons, beares, and buls, &c.
as would the following also, Book 5. Canto 2. St. 30.

Yet was admired much of *fooles, women, and boys*,
if we were to read,

Yet was admired much of women, *fooles*, and boys.

But these *corrections* are made by the critic, upon a supposition that his author must have infallibly written what was *best*.” The reader will recollect, that these lines are in the course of a very long poem; yet so little had Warton's ear profited by his acquaintance with the Greek and Italian writers as well as those of his own country, that he had obtained no perception of what is musical beyond that of mere smoothness. Upon this note Mr. Upton very justly observes, that “as nothing is so tiresome as verse in the same unvaried measure and cadence, so the best poets, as Homer and Virgil among the ancients, Spenser and Milton among the moderns,

of any pretensions, who shall come before them without a new stop or two to his lyre.—To come to particulars. — Let the reader take any dozen or twenty lines from Pope at a hazard, or if he please, from his best and most elaborate passages, and he will find that they have scarcely any other pauses than at the fourth or fifth syllable, and both with little variation of accent. Upon these the poet is eternally dropping his voice, line after line, sometimes upon only one of them for eight or ten lines together; so that when Voltaire praised him for bringing down the harsh wranglings of the English trumpet to the soft tones of the flute*, he should have added, that he made a point of stopping every instant

* Dictionnaire Philosophique, Art. Pope.—The reader will allow me to deprecate any application of these remarks on versification to the Feast of the Poets. The unambitious ballad-measure in which it is written, has not only had a particular time and tune annexed to it from time immemorial, so as to be led off like a kind of dance, but as the couplets are really made up of four lines thrown into two, may be allowed to appeal to it's own laws. This however is a trifle not worth the settling. The chief merit which is expected in verses of this description is idiomatical easiness.

upon one or two particular notes. See, for instance, the first twenty lines of Windsor Forest, the two first paragraphs of Eloisa to Abelard, and that gorgeous misrepresentation of the exquisite moonlight picture in Homer. The last may well be quoted :—

As when the moon—refulgent lamp of night,
O'er Heav'n's clear azure—spreads her sacred light,
When not a breath—disturbs the deep serene,
And not a cloud—o'ercasts the solemn scene;
Around her throne—the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumber'd—gild the glowing pole,
O'er the dark trees—a yellower verdure shed,
And tip with silver—ev'ry mountain's head;—
Then shine the vales—the rocks in prospect rise,
A flood of glory—bursts from all the skies:
The conscious swains—rejoicing in the sight,
Eye the blue vault—and bless the useful light.

Yet this is variety to the celebrated picture of Helinda in the Rape of the Lock—

Not with more glories—in th' ethereal plain
The sun first rises—o'er the purpled main,
Than issuing forth—the rival of his beams,
Laneth'd on the bosom—of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs and well-dress'd youths—around her shone,
But ev'ry eye—was fix'd on her alone.

On her white breast—a sparkling mass she wore
 Which Jews might kiss—and infidels adore.
 Her lively looks—a sprightly mind disclose,
 Quick as her eyes—and as unfix'd as those:
 Favours to none—to all she smiles extends;
 Oft she rejects—but never once offends.
 Bright as the sun—her eyes the gazers strike,
 And like the sun—they shine on all alike.
 Yet graceful ease—and sweetness void of pride,
 Might hide her faults—if belles had faults to hide:
 If to her share—some female errors fall,
 Look on her face—and you'll forget them all.

This is a very brilliant description of a drawing-room heroine; but what are the merits of its versification, which are not possessed by even Sternhold and Hopkins? Out of eighteen lines, we have no less than *thirteen* in *succession* which pause at the fourth syllable,—to say nothing of the four *ies* and the six *os* which fall together in the rhymes; and the accent in all is so unskillfully managed, or rather so evidently and totally forgotten, that the ear has an additional monotony humming about it,—

Quick as her eyes,
 Favours to none,
 'Oft she rejects,
 Bright as the sun.

It does not follow that the critic who objects to this kind of sing-song, should be an advocate for other extremes and for the *affected* varieties of which Johnson speaks. Let the varieties, like all the other beauties of a poet, be perfectly unaffected: but passion and fancy naturally speak a various language; it is monotony and uniformity alone that are out of nature. When Pope, in one of his happy couplets, ridiculed the old fashion of gardening, he forgot that on principles common to all the arts, he was passing a satire on himself and his versification; for who can deny, that in the walks of his Muse

Grove nods at grove—each alley has it's brother,
And half the platform—just reflects the other?

As the present notes are written for the poem to which they belong, not the poem for the notes, it is high time to finish the one before me; otherwise I was much tempted to conclude it with some counter examples of real poetic harmony from the verses of Dryden, Spenser, and Milton; not that the style of any great writer is to be imitated at a venture, or to be studied with any

direct view to imitation at all; but because in the best effusions of those writers are to be found the happiest specimens of English versification, and such as with due regard to every man's own mode of thinking and speaking, might lead the poets of the present age to that proper mixture of sweetness and strength,—of modern finish and ancient variety,—from which Pope and his rhyming facilities have so long withheld us.

*Not though I collected one pattern victorious
Of all that was good; and accomplish'd, and glorious,
From deeds in the daylight, and books on the shelf,
And call'd up the shape of young Alfred himself.*

A note upon Alfred might be indulged me, on the strength of his having been reckoned the “Prince of the Saxon Poets;” but the name of that truly great man is not to be mentioned without enthusiasm by any constitutional Englishman,—that is to say by any Englishman, who truckling to no sort of licentiousness, either of prince or people, would see the manliest freedom of a republic, adorned by the grace

and quickened by the unity of a monarchy.—But to whom indeed, that has an admiration for any great or good quality, is not the memory of Alfred a dear one?—a man, beloved in his home, feared by his enemies, venerated by his friends,—accomplished in a day of barbarism,—anticipating the wisdom of ages,—self-taught, and what is more, self-corrected,—a *Prince* too, who subdued the love of pleasure,—a Monarch, who with power to enslave, delighted to make free,—a Conqueror, who could stop short of the love of conquest, and sheath his sword the moment it had done enough,—a Sage, in short, who during the greatest part of a reign, in which he had practised every art of peace as well as war, of leisure as well as activity,—in which he had fought upwards of fifty pitched battles, had cleared his country from it's invaders, and had established the foundation of those liberties, upon which we are at this moment enjoying our every-day comforts, had to struggle with a melancholy and agonizing disorder, which neither soured his temper nor interrupted his industry. If this is a character to make emula-

tion despair, it is a character also to make despair itself patient, and to convert it into an invincible spirit.

It is not generally known to the admirers of Alfred, that there is a life of him extant, written in Latin by one of his most familiar and intelligent friends, Asser of Saint David's, whom he had invited to court from a monastery. There is a good edition of it, and I believe, not a scarce one, by Francis Wise, who was Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and Assistant Librarian of the Bodleian*. The life is the more interesting, not only as it furnishes an authentic document for some of the most curious particulars, which our known historians have made popular, and for more which have been related by others, but inasmuch as the author exhibits evident marks of his being a plain-spoken, impartial man, and with all his veneration for Alfred, does not scruple to speak of the faults of his youth, and even to attribute his misfortunes to

* The one I have is an octavo, printed at Oxford in 1722, but the first edition appears to have been in quarto. Asser was edited also by Camden and by Archbishop Parker.

such causes as were likely to strike a churchman in that age. The substance of Asser is contained in the fourth and fifth books of Mr. Turner's History of the Anglo-Saxons, where the reader will find a more copious and interesting account of Alfred, though written in a singular style, than in any other English performance.

It is still however a disgrace to English biography, that there is no life of our unrivalled countryman, important enough from the size and the composition to do him justice. The notices of Milton, Hume, and Burke, who like all other wise men, of all opinions and countries, have united to speak of him with one voice, are mere notices, however excellent of their kind. Little perhaps could be added to the facts of his story; but they are of a nature to be rendered doubly interesting by proper management; no subject, it is evident, could be more justly provocative of elegant reflection and illustration; and a compact, lively volume, written by one who was learned enough to enter into the language of his hero, of taste enough to relish his

accomplishments, and of knowledge and spirit enough to apprehend the real greatness of his character, would be a treasure to be laid up in the heart of every Englishman, and tend to perpetuate those solid parts of our character, which are the only real preservatives of our glory.

*'Twas lucky for Colman he wasn't there too,
For his pranks would have certainly met with their due,—
And Sheridan's also, that finished old tricker,—
But one was in prison, and both were in liquor.*

It cannot be supposed, especially in my present situation, that I should object to a man on the mere ground of his being circumscribed in his movements; but it is pretty well known, I believe, that it is not plain-dealing which sent Mr. Colman to prison, nor any very great care for his honour which keeps him there. These are matters, however, upon which I am loth to touch; and therefore dismiss them.—The pertinacious ribaldry of Mr. Colman, and his affectation of regarding it's reprovers as hypocrites,—things which look more like the robust ignorance of

from illegibility to his greater honours or inability to sustain the strength of his wine, are, it must be confessed, of very unequal merits. Mr. Montgomery is perhaps the most poetical of the three, Mr. Rogers the best informed, and Mr. Spencer the soonest pleased with himself. The first seems to write with his feelings about him, the second with his books, the third with his recollections of yesterday and his cards of invitation. The most visible defect of Mr. Montgomery, who appears to be an amiable man, is a sickliness of fancy, which throws an air of feebleness and lassitude on all that he says;—the fault of Mr. Rogers is direct imitation of not the best models, written in a style at once vague and elaborate. His *Pleasures of Memory*,—a poem, at best, in imitation of Goldsmith,—is written in the worst and most monotonous taste of modern versification,—to say nothing of the never-failing *souls* and *controuls*, *thoughts* and *fraughts*, *tablets*, *tracings*, *impartings*, and all the endless common-places of magazine rhyming. Mr. Rogers, of late years, seems to have become aware of the defects of his versifi-

ication, and attempted the other day to give his harp a higher and more various strain in the fragment upon Columbus ;—but the strings appear to have been in danger of snapping. It was ludicrous enough however, and affords a singular instance of the habitual ignorance of versification in general, to find the Quarterly Review objecting to a line in this fragment, for running a syllable out of its measure and attempting to snatch one of the finest graces of our older poetry,

The best thing in Mr. Rogers's productions appears to me to be his Epistle to a Friend, describing a house and its ornaments. It has a good deal of elegant luxury about it, and seems to have been the best written because the most felt. Here he was describing from his own taste and experience, and not affecting a something which he had found in the writers before him.

*But mind that you treat him as well as you're able,
And let him have part of what goes from the table,*

Mr. Crabbe is unquestionably a man of genius,

possessing imagination, observation, originality: he has even powers of the pathetic and the terrible, but with all these fine elements of poetry, is singularly deficient in taste, his familiarity continually bordering on the vulgar, and his seriousness on the morbid and the shocking. His versification, where the force of his thoughts does not compel you to forget it, is a strange kind of bustle between the lameness of Cowper and the slipshod vigour of Churchill, though I am afraid it has more of the former than the latter. When he would strike out a line particularly grand or melodious, he has evidently no other notion of one than what Pope or Darwin has given him. Yet even in his versification, he has contrived, by the colloquial turn of his language and his primitive mention of persons by their christian as well as surname, to have an air of his own; and indeed there is not a greater mannerist in the whole circle of poetry, either in a good or bad sense. His main talent, both in character and description, lies in strong and homely pieces of detail, which he brings before you as clearly and to the life

as in a camera obscura, and in which he has been improperly compared to the Dutch painters, for in addition to their finish and identification, he fills the very commonest of his scenes with sentiment and an interest.

*" One ten thousandth part of the words and the time,
That you've wasted on praises instead of your rhyme,
Might have gain'd you a title to this kind of freedom,—*

*But volumes of endings, lugg'd in as you need 'em,
Of hearts and imparts,—where's the soul that can
read 'em?*

There is something not inelegant or unbecom-
ing in the conduct of Mr. Hayley's *Triumphs of Temper*,
and the moral is of that useful and desirable descrip-
tion, which from its domestic familiarity is too apt
to be overlooked, or to be thought incapable of
embellishment:—but in this as well as in all his
other writings, there is so much talking by rote, so
many gratuitous metaphors, so many epithets to fill
up and rhymes to fit in, and such a mawkish language

of versification, with every now and then a ridiculous hurrying for a line or so, that nothing can be more palling or tiresome. The worst part of Mr. Hayley is that smooth-tongued and overwrought complimentary style, in addressing and speaking of others, which, whether in conversation or writing, has always the ill-fortune, to say the least of it, of being suspected as to sincerity. His best part, as has been justly observed, is his Annotation. The notes to his poems are amusing and full of a graceful scholarship; and two things must be remembered to his honour,—first, that although he had not genius enough to revive the taste in his poetry, he has been the quickest of our late writers to point out the great superiority of the Italian school over the French; and second, that he has been among the first, and the most ardent of them all, in hailing the dawn of our native painting. Indeed, with the singular exception of Milton, who had visited Italy, and who was such a painter himself, it is to be remembered to the honour of all our poets, great and small, that they

have shown a just anxiety for the appearance
 sister art; and in the same way, the poet

And felt a brother's longing to embrace "

At the least glimpse of her resplendent face

It would appear, from some specimens
 notes, that Mr. Hayley would have cut

advantageous figure as a translator than as an
 poet. I do not say he would have been a

great works; for a translator, to keep an

like a pace with his original, should have at

portion of his original spirit; but as Mr. H

not destitute of the poet, the thoughts of

might have invigorated him; and he would

rate have been superior to those mere rhy

such men as Hoole, for instance,—who

the smallest pretensions to poetry in their own p

think themselves qualified to translate epi

the notes to his Essays on Epic Poetry, the

pleasing analysis, with occasional versions of

or thirty lines, of the Araucana of Alonzo d'

and in the same place is a translation of the

first Cantos of Dante, which if far beneath the majestic simplicity of the original, is at least, for spirit as well as closeness, much above the mouthing nonentities which have been palmed upon us of late years for that wonderful poet. But Dante, to say nothing of his demands upon a variety of powers, in consequence of these varieties of his own, in which after shaking us with his terrors, or shocking us with his resentments and his diabolisms, he will enchant us with his grace, melt us with his tenderness, or refresh us with some exquisite picture of nature, is like all the other poets of the first class, scarcely translatable but by a kindred genius. The natural language they speak sets at nought the cant habit of books. You might as well endeavour, by the help of a fan, to gather round you the morning freshness of nature, as think of apprehending one of the great spirits of poetry, by means of these toys in versification. Even the real poets among us have not done justice to those whom they translated, with the exception of some smaller pieces of

lyric : Dryden wants the gracefulness and the selectness of Virgil, Chapman all the music of Homer, and Pope all the nature :—what then are we to expect from such a writer as Francis, or from that prince of involuntary crambo, Hoole ? No wonder that men of good sense and taste, who happen not to be scholars, have found Horace a dull fellow and Ariosto a dotard.

The best translation, upon the whole, that has been produced in our language, both for closeness to the sense and sympathy with the spirit of its original, appears to me to be Fairfax's Tasso. I do not say that it is a perfect one, or that it is not sometimes straitened for want of room, and sometimes clouded with the obscurities of its age ; but Fairfax seems to go along with his author, and to be more of a piece with him, than any translator perhaps that has yet appeared. The versification is singularly free for its closeness, and has always been accounted one of the earliest harmonizers of our poetry : Dryden calls him on this account the father of Waller, who

indeed was not slow to confess the relationship; and Fairfax, in renewing his claims upon our attention, may boast that he has been praised by Collins, and imitated by Milton.

The flowing versification of Fairfax has even drawn some writers into a love of him, who in other respects were not very seducible by the higher species of poetry. Among these is Hume, who compared a thing called Wilkie's *Epigoniad* to Virgil; and who was much inclined, in compliment to the rest of his French taste in literature, to call Shakspeare a barbarian.* Hume however is wrong when he says that "each line" in Tasso "is faithfully rendered by a correspondent line in the translation." The faithfulness, it is true, is for the most part as surprising as he represents it, and the number of lines is the same in both poems; but Fairfax has occasionally substituted a line of his own for the sense of the original, sometimes, as may be supposed, with no good to his author, yet sometimes even

* See the Appendix to the reign of James the First.

with improvement, and the line has always something poetical in it, though its taste may not be the true one. In the third book, for instance, stanza 21st, where Tancred unknowingly encounters Clorinda, and knocks off her helmet, Fairfax says

About her shoulders shone her golden locks,
Like sunny beams on alabaster rocks.

This is a splendid image; but Tasso merely says, with a more natural and momentary touch, that her golden locks were shaken out in the wind, and a young female appeared before him—

*E le chiome dorate al vento sparse,
Giovane donna in mezzo 'l campo apparse.*

The conclusion of the succeeding stanza has also a turn with it unlike the original, and not in so allowable a taste, though its faultiness is Italian. But in other instances Fairfax can contend with his author, even at his best; as in that close of the 14th stanza, canto 1st, describing the descent of the angel Gabriel, who is represented by Tasso as first dropping his sight upon Lebanon, and balancing

himself, as he lights, on equalized wings—su l'adequate penne—

Pria sul Libano monte ei si ritenne,
E si libró au l'adequate penne.

This elegant imitation of Virgil, Fairfax improved into a thought as new as it was beautiful,—

On Lebanon at first his foot he set,
And shook his wings with rory may-dews wet.

Milton, passing over the original in this passage, copies the translator, and that nothing may be lost, adds attitude to the motion from Virgil, and turns the due into fragrance from Sannazarius :

Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heav'nly fragrance fill'd
The circuit wide. Book 5.

But I am getting unawares into a luxurious gossiping, quite out of my subject. The chief purpose for which I mentioned Fairfax was to suggest a republication of him in preference to the commonplace dulness of Hoole, who would assuredly have never been tolerated, had not the last age of poetry, in which he lived, been given up to the lees of the

French taste. The love of Italian literature which began to revive among a few scholars of that age, is beginning to have it's effect upon this ; and if it continue, will do a great deal of good both to our fancy and versification,—I mean, will put them both in a right way of exercising their faculties and help them to think and speak for themselves ; for there is no danger that we shall fall into those errors of the Italian school, which however they may have been exaggerated by superficial observers, certainly do exist, and which are the natural overgrowth of fancy at certain periods of it's flourishing. Our long habits of criticism will save us from those.

It is to be observed, after all, in speaking of schools of poetry, that they are only to be recommended comparatively. We are much more likely to get at a real poetical taste through the Italian than through the French school,—through Spenser, Milton, and Ariosto, than Pope, Boileau, and their followers ; the former will teach us to vary our music and to address ourselves more directly to nature ; but nature herself is, of course, the great and perfecting mis-

tress, without whom we become either eccentric pretenders, or dangles after inferior beauty, or repeaters, at best, of her language at second hand. We must study where Shakspeare studied,—in the fields, in the heavens,—in the heart and fortunes of man ;—and he, and the other great poets, should be our reading out of school-hours.

*° So saying, he rang, to leave nothing in doubt,
And the sour little gentleman bless'd himself out.*

Mr. Gifford is a man of strong natural sense, with such acquired talents, as are apt to impress us with double respect, when their history is connected with early difficulties and an humble origin. The manner in which he has related those difficulties, in the interesting little memoir prefixed to his Juvenal, is calculated to give his readers a regard for him as well as respect ; and upon the whole, there is no living author perhaps, who might have enjoyed a more unmingled reputation, of the middle species, than Mr. Gifford. But a vile, peevish temper, the more inexcusable in it's indulgence, because he appears to

have had early warning of its effects, breaks out in every page of his criticism, and only renders his affected grinning the more obnoxious. (There is a generosity in his satire :—the merest folly he treats not only with ridicule but resentment ; and even a mistake, upon a point which he understands better than some unlucky commentator, is something upon which he thinks himself entitled to be indignant and retributive. I pass over the nauseous Epistle to Peter Pindar, and even the notes to his Baviad and Mœviad, where though less vulgar in his language, he has a great deal of the pert cant and snip-snap which he deprecates, and wastes a ludicrous quantity of triumph over every poor creature that comes athwart him ; but he cannot repress this spirit even upon better men, as may be seen where he differs with his brother commentators on Juvenal ; and every decent mind, I believe, has been disgusted with his tiresome, peevish, and useless insults over his predecessors in the explanation of Massinger. Had Mr. Gifford, for his own mistakes only, been treated with the roughness which he has shewn towards others, he

would have had enough to bear; but to visit on him the full return of his temper, would be a severity, as humiliating to a proper satirist, as intolerable to himself.

Our author however does not appear to have carried this enthusiastic impatience of his against all the circles of life, with which his talents have successively made him acquainted. Like his remorseless but at the same time discriminating brother critics, the Suppressors of Vice, his indignation appears to have made a reasonable stop in approaching the higher orders; and thus from a wrathful, personal satirist of vice and folly, he has softened and settled himself into an editor of old dramatists and of government reviews, who is only wrathful in speaking of the objectors to princely vices, and only personal upon dead men or respectable ladies. Let a man have made a mistake upon an old poet fifty years back, and he shall be properly denounced; let Mrs. Barbauld, to whom the rising generation are so much indebted, publish but a poetical opinion in verse, differing with the rulers that are and the

opinions that ought to be, and she shall be brought forward with all her poetical sins on her head ;—nay, let a married lady give us but an account of her voyage to India in following her husband, and she shall have gone there to get one ;—but speak not of “ the imputed weaknesses of the great.”* Princes might formerly have kept mistresses ; they might also have discarded them ; and these discarded mistresses, if they sinned in rhyme, might be denounced accordingly, even to their rheumatism and their crutches ;† —but no such things are done now, either by princes or by the favourites of princes ; speak not of “ the imputed weaknesses of the great ;”—there were vices at court formerly,—vices in Juvenal’s time,—vices even in our own time, when bad poets were going and ladies fell lame,—but now,—talk of no such thing ; every prince lives with his wife as he ought to do, keeps the most virtuous company as he always did, and is hailed, of course, wherever he goes, with

* Quarterly Review, No. 18, p. 148.

† See a pleasant and manly fling at Mrs. Robinson’s “ crutches” in the *Bavard*, v. 28.

shouts of a cordial popularity :—the vices, that might reverse such a character, are only “imputed” to him ;—to use a pithy and favourite mode of quotation, “There’s no such thing !”

With regard to Mr. Gifford’s poetical claims, which I had nearly forgotten, he seems to have thought very justly, that the Juvenal required something better than the usual monotonous versification ; but in aiming at vigour and variety, he has fallen into no versification at all, and become lame and prosaical. The only approach that he ever made to the poetical character was in some pleasing and even pathetic lines in the notes to his *Mœviad*, beginning

I wish I was where Anna lies ;—

but such lines coming in such a place, in the very thick of petty resentments and vulgar personalities, contradict the better taste that is in them, and give the reader perhaps as distasteful an idea of the author, at the time of life when he inserted them, as any one passage of his writings.

10 *For his host was a God,—what a very great thing !
And what was still greater in his eyes,—a King !*

Αἰεὶ Ἀπώλλων,—King Apollo,—a common title with the old Grecian poets.—See the following note.

11 *Be original, men ; study more, scribble less,
Nor mistake present favour for lasting success ;
And remember, if laurels are what you would find,
The crown of all triumph is freedom of mind.*

Of Mr. Walter Scott's innate and trusting reverence for thrones and dominations, the reader may find specimens abundantly nauseous in the edition of Dryden. His style in prose, setting aside it's Scotticisms, is very well where he affects nothing beyond a plain statement or a brief piece of criticism ; and it is not to be supposed that his critical observations are always destitute of acuteness or even of beauty ; but the moment he attempts any thing of particular ease or profundity, he only becomes slovenly in the one instance and poetically pedantic in the other. His politics may be estimated at once by the simple fact, that of all the advocates

of Charles the Second, he is the least scrupulous in mentioning his crimes, because he is the least abashed. Other writers have paid decency the compliment of doubting their extent or of keeping them in the back-ground; but here we have the plainest, tooth-picking acknowledgements, that Charles was a pensioner of France, a shameless debauchee, a heartless friend, and an assassinating master, and yet all the while he is little else but the "gay monarch," the "merry monarch," the "witty monarch," the "good-natured monarch," and Mr. Scott really appears to think little or nothing of all that he says against him. On the other hand, let a villain be but a Whig, or let any unfortunate person, with singular, Southern notions of independence, be but an opposer of Charles's court, and he is sure to meet with a full and crying denunciation of his offences, with raised hands and lifted eyeballs. The execution of Charles the First Mr. Scott calls an enormity unequalled in modern history, till the present age furnished a parallel—massacres, of course, and other trifles of that sort, particularly when kings and courtiers are the

actors, fade before it; St. Bartholomew's day deserves to be counted lucky in comparison with it; and princely villains like Henry the Eighth, Ezzechino, and Borgia, are respectable and conscientious men by the side of the President Bradshaw and his colleagues. At the same time, a king, who by the basest means and for the slightest cause would assassinate a faithful servant in the very act of performing his duty, is only ungenerous,—one of whom the said servant has no small reason to complain. The reader may think this representation exaggerated, but let the author speak for himself. “His political principles (the Earl of Mulgrave's) were those of a staunch Tory, which he maintained through his whole life; and he was zealous for the royal prerogative; although he had *no small reason to complain* of Charles the Second, who to avenge himself of Mulgrave for a supposed attachment to the Princess Anne, sent him to Tangiers, at the head of some troops, in a leaky vessel, which it was supposed must have perished in the voyage. Though Mulgrave was apprised of the danger, he scorned to shun it; and the Earl

of Plymouth, a favourite son of the King, generously insisted upon sharing it along with him. This *un-generous attempt* to destroy him in the very act of performing his duty, with the refusal of a regiment, made a temporary change in Mulgrave's conduct." Notes on Absalom and Achitophel in Dryden's Works, vol. ix. p. 304.

Of Mr. Walter Scott's poetry the estimate is sufficiently easy, and will now perhaps, after the surfeit he has given us of it, be pretty generally acknowledged. It is little more than a leap back into the dress and the diction of rude but gorgeous times, when show concealed a great want of substance, and a little thinking was conveyed in a great many words. Thus it is not invidious to call the late demand for it a fashion, for it was almost as mere a fashion as the revival of any other artificial mode, and just as likely to go out again. That Mr. Scott is a poet is not to be controverted;—he has a lightsome fancy, pleasing circumstance, luxury of description; and in his idea of Marion has shewn a taste for that mixture of genuine human character with the abstrac-

tions of poetry, which is a mark of no ordinary genius for narrative. But when the novelty of a particular mode of style is gone, a poet will obtain reputation for little else than a discernment of other men's beauties, who has no natural language and no style of his own,—who cannot describe what he sees and feels but in phrases previously set down for him,—and who must therefore be suspected of seeing and feeling, not so much from his own perceptions, as from the suggestions of those that have gone before him. Mr. Scott's ladies gay and barons bold, his full-wells and I-pray-yous, his drinkings of "*the red wine*" and his "*kirtles of the crannasie*,"—his rhymes pressed in to the service, and his verses dancing away now and then out of the measure, may have been new to the town in general, but they are as ancient as recollection itself to the readers of poetry; and a person tolerably well read in old songs and stories might exclaim with Dr. Johnson on a similar occasion,

Wheresoe'er I turn my view,
All is old and nothing new,
Trick'd in antique ruff and bonnet.

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The plea, if any such has been made, of stitting the language of the poem to the manners of the story, is a mere excuse for want of power to talk naturally: for to say nothing of the continued modern smoothness which is added to the old versification, and of the different periods of time to which the self-same language is applied, no writers, not excepting the old romancers themselves, ever did or could adapt their language to the times of their story, unless the events they described were contemporary. The romancers indeed notoriously violated every species of *proper* costume to suit themselves to their own period, and if they had attempted to retain an *improper* costume and to talk in the language of previous times, we should in vain have looked for those natural bursts of passion, and all those affecting simplicities, which they were enabled to put in the mouths of others, by speaking, as they felt, from their own. Thus even what was a natural language in these writers, becomes, from the imitation, an unnatural and affected one in Mr. Scott; and in

fact, he talks the language of no times and of no feelings, for his style is too flowing to be ancient, too antique to be modern, and too artificial in every respect to be the result of his own first impressions.

There is indeed a general want of ambition about Mr. Scott, and a contentedness with what is shewy rather than solid, that look like a poet of no very great order. His resorting to a style so easy of imitation, his giving himself up to a profusion of words and prettinesses on which he might rhyme by the hour, and his coming out, year after year, with a new poem provocative of all sorts of suspicions connected with the *trade*,—all exhibit something, ready indeed, and entertaining, and penny-turning, but very far from what is either lasting or noble. Mr. Scott writes a very sprightly ballad, can sketch a good character from the life, and can hide himself to advantage in the costume of other times; but brought forward in his own unassisted person, and judged by a high standard of poetry, he wants originality and a language.

12 But there's one thing I've always forgotten to mention,

Your versification,—pray give it intention.

Mr. Campbell seems to have hampered his better genius between the versification of others and the struggle to express his own thoughts in their natural language. I speak not of the *Pleasures of Hope*, which though abundant in promise, is a young and uninformed production in comparison with his subsequent performances:—but I am persuaded that nobody would ever have thought of comparing that poem with the *Gertrude of Wyoming*, or of undervaluing the latter in general, and regarding it as not answering the promise of his youth, if in quitting the ordinary versification of the day, he had not deviated into another imitation and got into the trammels of Spenser. The style perhaps is not so much an imitation of Spenser, as of Thomson, the imitator of Spenser; but the want of originality is certainly not lessened by this remove from the fountain-head. In Spenser's style and stanza there is undoubtedly a great deal of harmony and dignity, and specimens

of almost every beauty of writing may be found in them; but they will hardly be pleasing now-a-days in a poem of any length, unless the subject involves a portion of the humorous or satirical, as in the *School-Mistress* and the *Castle of Indolence*, where the author looks through his seriousness with a smile, and the quaintnesses of the old poetry fall in with his lurking archness or his assumed importance. And the reasons would seem to be obvious; for not to dwell upon the inherent and unaccommodating faults of the stanza in a long English poem, such as its tendency to circumlocution and its multitude of similar rhymes, it has always an air of direct imitation, which is unbecoming the dignity of an original seriousness; and its old words and inversions contradict that freshness and natural flow of language, which we have a right to expect in the poet that would touch our affections. We demand,--not the copy of another's simplicity, but the simplicity of the speaker himself;--we want an unaffected, contemporaneous language, such as our ears and our hearts shall equally recognize, and such as our own feelings would utter,

were they as eloquent as the poet's. The choice of this style is the more to be regretted in Mr. Campbell, because his genius evidently points to the most attractive sympathies of our nature, and his great talent lies in the pathetic. Indeed it is observable, how inevitably his own taste leads him to forget the imitative turn of his versification, whenever he has to describe some particular scene, in which the affections are interested; but the present stock of readers, who have had their ears spoiled by easy versification, will not readily consent to exchange it for one of a less accommodating description with additional difficulties. Of several styles of imitation that come before them, they will inevitably prefer that which comes easiest to their old habits; and this is one great reason why the productions of Mr. Walter Scott have outrun in popularity the coyness of Gertrude of Wyoming,—the first poem, in my mind, of any length, that has been produced in the present day.—While I have been palled with the eternal sameness of Mr. Scott, and disgusted with the puerilities and affectations of Mr. Southey,

I have read over and over again the *Gertrude of Wyoming*, and have paid it that genuine tribute, which the pride of manhood and the necessary habits of adversity are not much in the custom of lavishing.

In speaking of Mr. Campbell, his smaller pieces must not be forgotten. Their merits are very unequal, and some of them, written perhaps in early youth, seem altogether unworthy of his pen; but *Hohenlinden*, and the two naval songs, are noble pieces, beautifully dashed with the pathetic; and the *Soldier's Dream* is one of those heartfelt and domestic appeals, from which the fancy, after dwelling upon their tenderness, is suddenly glad to escape.

*And never should poet, so gifted and rare,
Pollute the bright Eden Jove gives to his care,
But love the fair Virtue for whom it is given,
And keep the spot pure for the visits of Heaven.*

It is natural in congratulating a person on his escape from some extraordinary defect, to forget the mention of smaller ones; otherwise, Apollo might have rallied Mr. Moore on his exuberant fondness for

dews, flowers, and exclamations, and have quarrelled with him for not applying his powers to some poem of length that should exhibit them in their proper light. The first of these faults however will most likely follow the other misdemeanours of his youth; and the latter he is understood to be doing away, at this moment, in a country retirement. Certainly the pernicious tendency of Mr. Moore's former productions is not to be questioned:—it was only to be equalled perhaps by the good that might result from a change in his way of thinking, and from the pains he would take, when so altered, to transfer the attractiveness of his style to the cause of virtue. But there always appeared to me, in the midst of that taste of his, a cordial and redeeming something,—a leaning after the better affections,—which shewed a conscious necessity of correcting it. Part with it altogether he need not as a writer, and could not as a poet; but to correct and unite it with nobler sympathies was his business as a true lover both of the sex and of his country. It would have been inconsistent in a politician so spirited, and as

patriot so warm as Mr. Moore, to assist in rendering us slaves in private, while he would have us all freemen in public.

The real admirers therefore of this poet were rejoiced to see in his latter publication, the *Irish Melodies*, how greatly he had improved his morality, and not only so, but how much the graces of his fancy had gained instead of lost by the improvement. In the sprightly and idiomatic flow of his songs he had already overtaken Prior, and on the ground of sentiment had left him behind; but the union of strong fancy and feeling discoverable in his later productions, and the unexpected appearance of a taste for the dignified and contemplative, so distinct from the town associations that crowded about one's ordinary idea of him, were promises of a still greater reputation, and will enable him, it is trusted, to reach posterity under an exemplary as well as graceful aspect.

As a versifier, Mr. Moore does not appear, hitherto, to have attempted any improvement of the models he found in vogue; but what he might do in this

respect may easily be conceived, from the natural fineness of his ear. The lines in his lyric pieces however have a music in them, distinct from the ordinary monotony of his contemporaries, and evidently traceable to his taste for the sister art. You feel at once, that his songs are indeed to be sung,—a happy propriety, which he seems to share exclusively with Dryden.

*14 When, all of a sudden, there rose on the stairs
A noise as of persons with singular airs ;
You'd have thought 'twas the Bishops or Judges a coming,
Or whole court of Aldermen hawing and humming,
Or Abbot, at least, with his ushers before,
But 'twas only Bob Southey and two or three more.
The last couplet originally stood thus,—
Or at least my lord Colley with all his grand brothers;
But 'twas only Bob Southey and three or four others.*

Colley is one of the Christian names of the Marquis Wellesley. I notice this alteration, lest having felt myself bound to make it, I should seem to evade it's acknowledgment. There are still some points

about the Noble Marquis, which I may not particularly admire ; but the policy he has lately pursued, the just appreciation he seems to have of the contest with Bonaparte, and the military displayed by his brother in the peninsula, are far from warranting any contemptuous allusion to him or his family. There used to be certainly a feeling of distaste to them on account of imputed haughtiness ; nor did the Indian government, or their domestic politics, tend to diminish it ; but the Marquis's present conduct seems to be more independent than arrogant ; and there is a well balanced and strait-forward simplicity about the military character of the Field Marshal, worthy of the great cause to which his sword made an offering. The original line therefore, such as it is, is drawn against myself, and not against the noble brother.

*34 You'd have thought 'twas the Bishops or Jesuits
coming,*

Or whole court of Aldermen, hawing and humming

*Or Alben, at least, with his uahers before;
But 'twas only Bob Southey, and two or three more.*

This alludes to the affectation of universal superiority,—of being best and wisest in whatever they felt, thought, and did,—which used to mark the Lake Poets in the days of their innocence, and has not forsaken them now that they are men of the world. It was then, however, a pardonable piece of boyishness and enthusiasm, at which good nature would smile ;—now, it has become a full-grown and insolent pretension, which good sense must deride.

It is curious to see with what apparent unconsciousness this change has been affected. The best feature in their character, till of late years, was their public as well as private integrity ; but the maudlin German cant which first infected their muse at last corrupted their manners, and being a jargon adapted to every sort of extreme, enabled them to change their free opinions for slavish ones, without altering the cast of their language. Good opinion still lingered about some of them ; but latterly the very

best have quite lost the bloom of their character and degenerated, like the others, into servile placemen and hunters, and gross editorial puffers of themselves. Mr. Southey, and even Mr. Wordsworth have both accepted offices under government, of such a nature, as absolutely ties up their independence; Mr. Coleridge, in pamphlets and newspapers, has done his best to deserve likewise; and yet they shall all tell you that they have not diminished their free spirit a jot. In like manner, they are as violent and intolerant against their old opinions, as ever they were against their new ones, and without seeing how far the argument carries, shall insist that no man can possess a decent head or respectable heart who does not agree with them. Persons who go to neither extreme, are of course to expect still less mercy, if possible. Mr. Southey, who is one of the pensioned reviewers in the Quarterly, does not blush to tell those who are acquainted with his former opinions of the great and their corruptions, that a mere stickler for Reform now-a-days, even with good intentions, is little

better than a "house-breaker."* Poor fellow! he must have been a sad well-meaning profligate in his younger days!—It is in vain you tell such reasoners, that you are neither Jacobin nor courtier, that you have never made a noise about equality, as they did formerly, nor ever truckled to the vice of a court, as they do now:—you differ with them; and that is enough, with their intolerant egotism, to prove you either fool or knave.

The grossness of this utter defiance of candour and consistency would be too despicable for notice, did it not tend to bring all profession and principle into doubt,—and to add strength, by so doing, to the scepticism of men of the world, and bitterness to the reflections of those who suffer for being otherwise. But let us never forget to separate an honest and

* See an article on the State of the Poor, in a late number of the Quarterly. I mention the authors of these reviews with the less scruple, because I think that anonymous writers in general have no right of concealment, particularly when they attack people in this manner,—and because I never thought myself at liberty to conceal my own name, when it either was asked or might be so.

tried consistency from the vague, complacental enthusiasm that starts away at the sight of danger, and runs into any and every extreme. The persons of whom we have been speaking have been always in extremes, and perhaps the good they are destined to perform in their generation, is to afford a striking lesson of the inconsistencies naturally produced by so being. Nothing remains the same but their vanity.

35 *As soon as he saw him, Apollo seem'd pleas'd,*

When this line was written, Mr. Southey had not quite thrown off the mask of independence, nor accepted those meaner laurels which Apollo would have had reason to disdain. Before that period, there was a native goodness about his character, and a taste for placid virtue in his writings, which conciliated regard and made us think of him with a pertinacious kindness. I will not answer, that my ideas of his poetry have not been of too high a description on this account, relying as they did on what appeared to be indicative of a finer species of mind.

and to promise something greater than he had yet performed; but let his praises remain;—it is not worth while to alter them.

It may be as well however to mention, that though Mr. Southey is represented as admitted where Mr. Wordsworth is not, it is not meant to insinuate that he is a better poet, but merely that he has not so abused the comparative little that was expected of him. He is no more to be compared with Mr. Wordsworth in real genius than the man who thinks once out of a hundred times is with him who thinks the whole hundred; but that he is at the same time a poet, will be no more denied, than that the hundredth part of Mr. Wordsworth's genius would make a poet. His fancy perhaps has gone little beyond books, but still it is of a truly poetical character; he touches the affections pleasingly though not powerfully; and his moral vein stands him in stead, as it ought to do, of a good deal of dignity in other respects. What he wants in the gross, is a natural strength of thinking, and in the particular, a real style of his own; for as his simplicity is more a thing

of words than of thoughts, he naturally borrows his language from those who have thought for him. What Mr. Wordsworth conceals from you, or in fact overcomes by the growth of his own mind, Mr. Southey leaves open and bald,—a direct imitation, prominent with nothing but *haths*, *ands*, *yeas*, *evens*, and other fragments of old speech. As to his attempt to bring back the Cowleian licentiousness of metre in another shape, and with nothing like an ear to make it seducing, it is a mere excuse for haste and want of study.

To return to the line in the text,—Apollo, I am afraid, is not as easily to be defended as myself, for a want of foresight so unbecoming his prophetic character;—but this I leave to be settled by some future BURMAN or BIFFRUS, whenever he shall do me the honour to find out the learning of this egregious performance, and publish the *Fest of the Pects* in two volumes quarto. Apollo, like other vivacious spirits, chose to do without his foresight sometimes, —as the commentator will no doubt have the goodness to shew, for me.

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By the way, speaking of Mr. Southey's court aurels, of which I have luckily said enough in another publication, people have not forgotten what he said formerly of "the *degraded* title of epic," and of his objections to write accordingly under such degradation. How is it, that he has not expressed a similar horror at the degraded title of Poet Laureat? He cannot pretend to say that it is not so, for setting aside the remaining reasons, one of the very persons who helped to degrade the one, contributed to do as much for the other. Would it not be better in some future edition of his works, to alter that word "degraded" into some more convenient epithet, such as *worthless* for instance,—that is to say, *valueless*,—*pennyless*,—something that does not give one a pension?

¹⁶ *For Coleridge had vex'd him long since, I suppose,
By his idling, and gabbling, and muddling in prose;—*

Mr. Coleridge is a man of great natural talents; as they who most lament his waste of them, are the readiest to acknowledge. Indeed it is their convic-

tion in this respect, which induces them to feel the waste as they do; and if Apollo shews him no quarter, it is evidently because he looks upon him as a deserter. Of his poetical defects enough will be said in speaking of those of Mr. Wordsworth; and if as much cannot be said of his kindred beauties, it is rather perhaps because he has written less and is a man of less industry, than because he does not equal the latter in genius. The allusion in the text is to his strange periodical publication, called the *Friend*. See Note 18.

There was an idle report, it seems, on the first appearance of Mr. Coleridge's tragedy, that I was the instigator of a party to condemn it. The play, as it happened, was not condemned, nor does any such party appear to have existed;—the criticism also, which was written upon it in the *Examiner*, by a friend, must have removed, I should think, all doubts on that head. It is very certain, that at the time of its appearance I was too ill to be out of doors,—nor is it less so, that regarding myself as a reporter of the public judgment in these matters,

I never thought myself justified in being a party on either side *vivâ voce*. Mr. Coleridge should do more credit to his own notions of opposition, than to suppose me capable of these idle tricks. If he still persists however in thinking it extraordinary that I should exhibit a more lively regret than others at seeing him throw away his fine genius as he has done, he may attribute it, if he pleases, to a cause from which he seems to have expected a reverse kind of treatment,—to my having been bred up, as well as himself, in the humble but not unlettered school, over which his memory might have thrown a lustre*.

* The Grammar-school of Christ's Hospital. Of this institution, which is of a truly English description, and a sort of medium betwixt the high breeding of the more celebrated foundations and the conscious humility of the charity-school, see a very interesting account in some late numbers of the Gentleman's Magazine by my friend Charles Lamb, who was contemporary there with Coleridge, and of whose powers of wit and observation I should delight to say more, if he had not confined those chief talents of his to the fireside. Mr. Coleridge, I believe, helped to give a new stimulus to the literary ambition of his school-fellows. We cannot boast of many great names; but of such as we have, we are fond in proportion to their fewness. It was here that the celebrated Camden received the rudiments of his learning; and I recollect, it used

*12 And Wordsworth, one day, made his very hairs bristle,
By going and changing his harp for a whistle.*

The allusion here scarcely needs a remark; but in revising my verses, and endeavouring to do justice to Mr. Wordsworth, I was anxious, whenever I mentioned him, to shew myself sensible of the great powers he possesses, and with what sort of gift he has consented to trifle.

*13 When one began spouting the cream of orations
In praise of bombarding one's friends and relations;*

Mr. Coleridge, in his *Friend*, ventured upon a studious and even cordial defence (at least so his readers understood it) of the attack on Copenhagen, —one of those lawless outrages, done in the insolence and impatience of power, which at first brought infamy, and have at last brought down retribution, upon the head of Bonaparte. The imitation of such

to be a proud enjoyment to us to witness the grateful inscriptions in gold letters with which Joshua Barnes had adorned the books that he presented to the library. As to college honours, at least in the *Belles Lettres*, it may be truly said that the school has of late years grown familiar with them.

actions proves how little the contest against him was understood at the time, either in it's moral or political point of view, or rather in it's only proper point of view, which comprises both;—but the world appears to have learnt better since.—The above parenthesis is used in speaking of the general acceptation of Mr. Coleridge's meaning, because he himself, it appears, has astounded some people by deprecating such a construction.

*¹⁹ And t'other some lines he had made on a straw,
Shewing how he had found it, and what it was for,
&c. &c.*

I am told, on very good authority, that this parody upon Mr. Wordsworth's worst style of writing has been taken for a serious extract from him, and panegyriized accordingly, with much grave wonderment how I could find it ridiculous!—See the next note.

*²⁰ The bard, like a second Æneas, went home in't,
And lives underneath it, it seems, at this moment.*

If Mr. Wordsworth is at present under a cloud, it

is one, we see, of a divinity's wearing; and he may emerge from it, whenever he pleases, with a proportionate lustre. May he speedily do so! There is nobody who would be prouder to hail that new morning than myself. Apollo should have another Feast on purpose to welcome it. It certainly appears to me that we have had no poet since the days of Spenser and Milton,—so allied in the better part of his genius to those favoured men, not excepting even Collins, who saw farther into the sacred places of poetry than any man of the last age. Mr. Wordsworth speaks less of the vulgar tongue of the profession than any writer since that period; he always thinks when he speaks, has always words at command, feels deeply, fancies richly, and never descends from that pure and elevated morality, which is the native region of the first order of poetical spirits.

To those who doubt the justice of this character, and who have hitherto seen in Mr. Wordsworth nothing but trifling and childishness, and who at the same time speak with rapture of Spenser and Milton, I would only recommend the perusal of such poems as the

Remains Vagrant in Lyrical Ballads, the Nightingale, the three little exquisite pieces from p. 50 to 53 of the 2d vol. (4th edition) another at p. 136,—the Old Cumberland Beggar, (a piece of perfect description philosophized); and in the two subsequent volumes of poems,—Louisa, the Happy Warrior, to H. C., the Sonnets entitled London and Westminster Bridges, another beginning "The World is too much with us," and the majestic simplicity of the Ode to Duty, a noble subject most nobly treated. If after this, they can still see nothing beautiful or great in Mr. Wordsworth's writings, we must conclude that their insight into the beauties of Spenser and Milton is imaginary,—and that they speak in praise of those writers as they do in dispraise of Mr. Wordsworth, merely by rote.

It may be asked me then, why with such opinions as I entertain of the greatness of Mr. Wordsworth's genius, he is treated as he is in the verses before us. I answer, because he abuses that genius so as Milton or Spenser never abused it, and so as to destroy those great ends of poetry, by which it should assist the

uses and refresh the spirits of life. From him, to whom much is given, much shall be required. Mr. Wordsworth is capable of being at the head of a new and great age of poetry; and in point of fact, I do not deny that he is so already, as the greatest poet of the present;—but in point of effect, in point of delight and utility, he appears to me to have made a mistake unworthy of him, and to have sought by eccentricity and by a turning away from society, what he might have obtained by keeping to his proper and more neighbourly sphere. Had he written always in the spirit of the pieces above-mentioned, his readers would have felt nothing but delight and gratitude; but another spirit interferes, calculated to do good neither to their taste nor reflections; and after having been elevated and depressed, refreshed and sickened, pained, pleased, and tortured, we close his volumes, as we finish a melancholy day, with feelings that would go to sleep in forgetfulness, and full waking faculties too busy to suffer it.

The theory of Mr. Wordsworth,—if I may venture to give in a few words my construction of the

curious and, in many respects, very masterly preface to the Lyrical Ballads, is this ;—that owing to a variety of existing causes, among which are the accumulation of men in cities and the necessary uniformity of their occupations,—and the consequent craving for extraordinary incident, which the present state of the world is quick to gratify, the taste of society has become so vitiated and so accustomed to gross stimulants, such as “frantic novels, sickly and stupid German tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse,” as to require the counteraction of some simpler and more primitive food, which should restore to readers their true tone of enjoyment, and enable them to relish once more the beauties of simplicity and nature ;—that, to this purpose, a poet in the present age, who looked upon men with his proper eye, as an entertainer and instructor, should chuse subjects as far removed as possible from artificial excitements, and appealing to the great and primary affections of our nature ;—thirdly and lastly, that these subjects, to be worthily and effectively treated, should be clothed in language

equally artless. I pass over the contingent parts of the Preface, though touching out, as they go, some beautiful ideas respecting poets and poetry in general, both because I have neither time nor room to consider them, and because they are not so immediate to my purpose. I shall merely observe, by the way, that Mr. Wordsworth does not seem to have exercised his feelings much on the subject of versification, and must protest against that attempt of his to consider perfect poetry as not essentially connected with metre,—an innovation, which would detract from the poet's properties, and shut up one of the finest inlets of his enjoyment and nourishers of his power,—the sense of the harmonious.

Now the object of the theory here mentioned has clearly nothing in the abstract, that can offend the soundest good sense or the best poetical ambition. In fact, it is only saying, in other words, that it is high time for poetry in general to return to nature and to a natural style, and that he will perform a great and useful work to society, who shall assist it to do so. I am not falling, by this interpretation, into the

error which Mr. Wordsworth very justly deprecates, when he warns his readers against affecting to agree with him in terms, when they really differ with him in taste. The truth which he tells, however obvious, is necessary to be told, and to be told loudly; and he should enjoy the praise which he deserves, of having been the first, in these times, to proclaim it. But the question is, (and he himself puts it at the end of his Preface) has Mr. Wordsworth "attained his object"? Has he acted up to his theory? Has he brought back that natural style, and restored to us those healthy and natural perceptions, which he justly describes as the proper state of our poetical constitution? I think not. He has shewn that he could do it, and in some instances he has set the example; but the popular effect of his poetry appears to me to be far otherwise; it gives us puerility for simplicity, affectation for nature; and only tends, in my mind, to go to the other extreme of what he deprecates, and substitute one set of diseased perceptions for another.

Delight or utility is the aim of the poet. Mr. Wordsworth, like one who has a true sense of the dignity of his profession, would unite both; and indeed, for their perfect ends, they cannot be separated. He finds then our taste for the one vitiated, and our profit of the other destroyed, and he says to us "Your complexion is diseased;—your blood fevered; you endeavour to keep up your pleasurable sensations by stimulants too violent to last, and which must be succeeded by others of still greater violence:—this will not do: your mind wants air and exercise,—fresh thoughts and natural excitements:—up, my friend; come out with me among the beauties of nature and the simplicities of life, and feel the breath of heaven about you."—No advice can be better: we feel the call instinctively; we get up, accompany the poet into his walks, and acknowledge them to be the best and most beautiful; but what do we meet there? Idiot Boys, Mad Mothers, Wandering Jews, Visitations of Ague, and Frenzied Mariners, who are fated to accost us with tales that

almost make one's faculties topple over.*—These are his refreshing thoughts, his natural excitements; and when you have finished with these, you shall have the smallest of your fugitive reflections arrested and embodied in a long lecture upon a thorn, or a story of a duffel-cloak, till thorns and duffel-cloaks absolutely confound you with their importance in life;—and these are his elementary feelings, his calm and counteracting simplicities.

Let the reader observe that I am not objecting to these subjects in behalf of that cowardly self-love falsely called sensibility, or merely because they are of what is termed a distressing description, but because they are carried to an excess that defeats the poet's intention, and distresses to no purpose. Nor should I select them as exhibiting a part of the character of Mr. Wordsworth's writings, rather than pass them over as what they really are, the defects of a great poet,—if the author himself had not especially invited our attention towards them as part of his sys-

* The last of these "idle and extravagant stories" was written, it seems, by Mr. Coleridge.

tem of counteraction, and if these and his occasional puerilities of style, in their disadvantageous effect upon his readers, did not involve the whole character and influence of his poetry.

But how is our passion for stimulants to be allayed by the substitution of stories like Mr. Wordsworth's? He wishes to turn aside our thirst for extraordinary intelligence to more genial sources of interest, and he gives us accounts of mothers who have gone mad at the loss of their children, of others who have killed their's in the most horrible manner, and of hard-hearted masters whose imaginations have revenged upon them the curses of the poor. In like manner, he would clear up and simplicize our thoughts; and he tells us tales of children that have no notion of death, of boys who would halloo to a landscape nobody knew why, and of an hundred inexpressible sensations, intended by nature no doubt to affect us, and even pleasurably so in the general feeling, but only calculated to perplex or sadden us in our attempts at analysis. Now it appears to me, that all the craving after intelligence, which Mr. Words-

worth imagines to be the bane of the present state of society, is a healthy appetite in comparison to these morbid abstractions: the former tends, at any rate, to fix the eyes of mankind in a lively manner upon the persons that preside over their interests, and to keep up a certain demand for knowledge and public improvement;—the latter, under the guise of interesting us in the individuals of our species, turns our thoughts away from society and men altogether, and nourishes that eremitical vagueness of sensation,—that making a business of reverie,—that despair of getting to any conclusion to any purpose, which is the next step to melancholy or indifference.

It is with this persuasion,—a persuasion, which has not come to me through the want of acquaintance either with solitude or society, or with the cares of either,—that I have ventured upon the piece of ridicule in the text. Mr. Wordsworth has beautifully told us, that to him

—————the meanest flow'r that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

I have no doubt of it; and far be it from me to cast

stones into the well in which they lie,—to disturb those reposing waters,—that freshness at the bottom of warm hearts,—those thoughts, which if they are too deep for tears, are also, in their best mood, too tranquil even for smiles. Far be it also from me to hinder the communication of such thoughts to mankind, when they are not sunk beyond their proper depth, so as to make one dizzy in looking down to them. The walk of Shakspeare is full of them; but he has managed to apply them to their proper refreshing purposes; and has given us but one fond recluse in his whole works,—the melancholy Jaques. Shall we forget the attractions which this melancholy philosopher felt towards another kind of philosopher, whom he met in the forest, and who made a jest of every thing? Let us be sure, that this is one of the results of pushing our abstractions too far, and of that dangerous art which Mr. Wordsworth has claimed for his simpler pieces,—the giving importance to actions and situations by our feelings, instead of adapting our feelings to the importance they possess. The consequence of this,

If carried into a system, would be, that we could make any thing or nothing important, just as diseased or healthy impulses told us ;—a straw might awaken in us as many profound, but certainly not as useful reflections, as the fellow-creature that lay upon it ; till at last, perplexed between the importance which every thing had obtained in our imaginations, and the little use of this new system of equality to the action and government of life, we might turn from elevating to depreciating, —from thinking trifling things important, to thinking important things trifling ; and conclude our tale of extremes by closing with expedience and becoming men of the world.—I would not willingly disturb the spirit, in which these remarks are written, by unpleasant allusions : but among the numerous acquaintances of Mr. Wordsworth, who have fallen in with his theories, perhaps he may be reminded of some, who have exemplified what I mean. He himself, though marked as government property, may walk about his fields uninjured, from the usual simplicity of his life and from very ignorance of what

he has undergone; but those who never possessed the real wisdom of his simplicity, will hardly retain the virtue; and as in less healthy men, a turn for the worst taste of his reverie would infallibly be symptomatic of a weak state of stomach rather than of a fine strength of fancy, so in men of less intellect, the imitation of his smaller simplicities is little else but an announcement of that vanity and weakness of mind, which is open to the first skilful corrupter that wishes to make use of it.

With regard to the language in which Mr. Wordsworth says that poetry should be written, his mistake seems to be this, —that instead of allowing degrees and differences in what is poetical, he would have all poetry to be one and the same in point of style, and no distinction allowed between natural and artificial associations. Nobody will contend with him that the language of nature is the best of all languages, and that the poet is at his height when he can be most fanciful and most feeling in expressions the most neighbourly and intelligible;—but the poet may sometimes chuse to shew his art in a manner more artful, and

appealing to more particular associations than what are shared by the world at large, as those of classical readers for instance. It is true, by so doing, he narrows his dominion, and gives up the glory of a greater and more difficult way; but he still rules us by a legitimate title, and is still a poet. In the one instance, he must have all the properties of the greatest of his profession,—fancy, feeling, knowledge;—in the other, he requires less feeling, and for knowledge may substitute learning;—a great inferiority no doubt, but still only differing in degree, for learning is but the knowledge of books, as knowledge is the learning of things. Mr. Wordsworth, to illustrate what he means, quotes the following sonnet of Gray, and says that “the only part of it, which is of any value, is the lines printed in *Italics*.”*

In vain to me the smiling mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
The birds in vain their amorous descant join,
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire.

* We repeat this sonnet with the less hesitation, because it does not appear in the usual editions of Gray, though one of the best and most original of his compositions. It was written on the death of his friend Richard West.

These ears alas! for other notes repine,
A different object do these eyes require,
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine,
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire;
 Yet morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
 And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
 The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
 To warm their little loves the birds complain.
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.

For the lines not marked in Italics much certainly cannot be said; but their chief fault, in point of association, and as specimens of the secondary species of poetry, is that they are misplaced; otherwise, in a piece professedly dealing in metaphorical and classical allusions, they would still be poetical, because still fanciful and because still referring to natural emotions. But the fairest mode of settling the question is to instance distinct pieces of the respective kinds, not those in which natural and artificial language interfere with each other and only serve to shew the great superiority of the former over the latter. If Shakspeare, for example, had written only

those two lines, one in the Merchant of Venice, where he speaks of moonlight,

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank,
and the other in Lear, where the poor old heart-bursting king, finding his trembling fingers too weak for him, and yet not forgetting the habitual politeness of his rank, turns to somebody and says,

Pray you undo this button ;—thank you, Sir—
he would have left to all posterity two exquisite proofs of his natural greatness in poetry, the one for fancy, the other for feeling. But on the other hand, Collins has left us little or nothing written in a natural language ;—almost the whole of his thoughts are turned upon personifications and learned abstractions, and expressed in what may be called the learned language of poetry ; yet to say nothing of his Odes on the Passions and Manners, there would be sufficient in that on the Poetical Character to stamp him a true poet ; and Mr. Wordsworth, by the way, with an evident feeling to this effect, has written an ode to his memory. It is the same with what Dryden calls the “ admirable Grecisms” of Milton*. Milton

* Essay on Satire, prefixed to the Juvenal.

could write with a natural greatness, though not as well as Shakspeare; but he chose also at times to be more artificial, and if he has been so too often, it only shews that his genius had less natural greatness about it and a smaller consciousness of resources; not that he had then put off his poetry altogether. Had he heard, in his time, of the project for excluding all language and all associations from poetry, but those of natural passion and humanity, he would have spoken with new feelings of the cessation of those ancient oracles, that have breathed out upon us a second inspiration; he would have lamented that

Apollo from his shrine
Should no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep, of Delphos leaving;
and have told us, with a share in the general sorrow,
how

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament:
From haunted spring and dale,
Edg'd with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flow'r-inwoven tresses torn
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thicket mourn.

If it were merely to keep such verses as these fresh for posterity, it would be worth while to protest against the exclusion of one species of poetry, merely because it has an elder and nobler brother. But the truth is, the exclusion would do harm to the cause of poetry in general; it would cut off, as we have seen, a direct portion of the skilful and delightful from poetry,—it would hinder a number of subjects from being treated poetically, that are now recommendable to the world by the process of versification;—it would rid us of one set of pretenders only to inundate us with another much more insufferable; the pretenders to simplicity; and finally, it would take away from the poetical profession something that answers to good breeding in manners, and that keeps it clear from rusticity and the want of an universal reception; for Shakspeare, who might be thought a counter-example from his want of scholastic learning, is in fact a singular example the other way, enriching the ground-work of his writings with figures and metaphors even to crowding, and evidently alive to all the use and dignity of classical allusion,—not

that a poet is always to be shewing his reading or learning, or letting the secret of his taste escape him; but that his taste in one respect, if managed like Shakspeare's, will teach him to feel what is best and most tasteful in others, and enable him to give a simple or passionate expression as much perfection on the score of nature, as a compounded and elaborate one upon that of art. Mr. Wordsworth, with something of a consciousness on this head, talks of selection in the very midst of what appears to others an absolute contempt of it. Now selection has an eye to effect, and is an acknowledgment that what is always at hand, though it may be equally natural, is not equally pleasing. Who are to be the judges then between him and his faults? Those, I think, who delighted with his nature, and happy to see and to allow that he has merits of his own superior to his felicitous imitations of Milton, (for the latter, after all, though admired by some as his real excellence, are only the occasional and perhaps unconscious tributes of his admiration) are yet dissatisfied and mortified with such encounterings of the bellman, as Harry Gill and We

are Seven ;—who think that in some of the effusions called *Moods of My Own Mind*, he mistakes the commonest process of reflection for it's result, and the ordinary, every-day musings of any lover of the fields for original thinking ;—who are of opinion, in short, that there is an extreme in nature as well as in art ; and that this extreme, though not equally removed from the point of perfection, is as different from what it ought to be and what nature herself intended it to be, as the ragged horse in the desert is to the beautiful creature under the Arab, or the dreamer in a hermitage to the waking philosopher in society.

To conclude this inordinate note : Mr. Wordsworth, in objecting to one extreme, has gone to another,—the natural commencement perhaps of all revolutions. He thinks us over-active, and would make us over-contemplative,—a fault not likely to extend very widely, but which ought still to be deprecated for the sake of those to whom it would. We are, he thinks, too much crowded together, and too subject, in consequence, to high-fevered tastes and worldly infections. Granted :—he, on the other hand, lives too much

apart, and is subject, we think, to low-fevered tastes and solitary morbidities;—but as there is health in both of us, suppose both parties strike a bargain,—he to come among us a little more and get a true sense of our action,—we to go out of ourselves a little oftener and acquire a taste for his contemplation. We will make more holidays into nature with him; but he, in fairness, must earn them, as well as ourselves, by sharing our working-days:—we will emerge oftener into his fields, sit dangling our legs over his styles, and cultivate a due respect for his daffodils; but he, on the other hand, must grow a little better acquainted with our streets, must put up with our lawyers, and even find out a heart or so among our politicians:—in short, we will recollect that we have hearts and brains, and will feel and ponder a little more to purify us as spirits; but he will be good enough, in return, to cast an eye on his hands and muscles, and consider that the putting these to their purposes is necessary to complete our part in this world as organized bodies.

Here is the good to be done on both sides; and as

society, I believe, would be much bettered in consequence, so there is no man, I am persuaded, more capable than Mr. Wordsworth, upon a better acquaintance with society, to do it the service. Without that acquaintance, his reputation in poetry may be little more salutary than that of an Empedocles in philosophy or a Saint Francis in religion:—with it, he might revive the spirit, the glory, and the utility of a Shakspeare.

21 *But wrath set's d Apollo, and turning again,
'Whatever', he cried, 'were the faults of such men,
Ye shall try, wretched mortals, how well ye can bear
What Dryden has witness'd, unsmote with despair.'*

This alludes to the insight which Dryden had into the higher species of poetry, without it's making him lose sight of the powers he really possessed. If he did not reach to the former, he saw what it was, undazzled, and did not become a neglecter of his own substance to indulge an idle hankering after that of wealthier minds. Yet the feebler and idler part of the poets here mentioned affect to speak of such men as Johnson and Dryden with contempt,—of Johnson,

who with all his defects and his bigotries, could master his morbidities to some purpose,—and of Dryden, who though deficient in sentiment, studied his art as they never did, and has written as they never can. I have heard, on good authority, that one of them calls Alexander's Feast “a drunken song.” It is much to be wished that the sobrieties of the present Laureat could produce such another. The song may be drunk, but it is with nectar.

²² *That sight and that music might not be sustain'd
But by those who a glory like Dryden's had gain'd.*

It is not intended to say here, that some of the poets in the text are not really of a more poetical complexion than Dryden, for I believe they are; but only that they have not yet produced what in the long run with posterity shall advance them before him. We see that they sustained much of the glory, though not all of it.

²³ *And old Peter Pindar turn'd pale, and suppress'd,
With a death-bed sensation, a blasphemous jest.*

It is a pity that this pleasant reprobate had not

a little more principle in his writings, for he has really a most original vein of humour,—such a mixture of simplicity, archness, and power of language, with an air of Irish helplessness running throughout, as is irresistibly amusing, and constitutes him a class by himself. He is the Fontaine of lampooners.—I know not whether any body ever thought of turning to him for his versification; but the lovers of the English heroic would be pleased, as well as surprised, to find in his management of it a more easy and various music than in much higher poets.

*“ 4 Tom Campbell's with willow and poplar was twin'd,
And Southey's with mountain-ash pluck'd in the wind,
And Scott's with a heath from his old garden stores,
And with vine-leaves and Jump-up-and-kiss-me, Tom
Moore's.*

The meaning of all these intercoronations is not as obvious, I am afraid, as it might be. The poplar is intended to imply a kind of artificial appearance in the midst of nature,—and may stand for a set elegance as well as an emblem of strength:—the “moun-

rain-ash pluck'd in the wind" has an air of "ingenuousness" with it, that vanishes when you come to look at its elegant minniness; and the heath from the old garden stores would suggest a sort of nursery for what ought to grow wild, and something too much of the gardener's trade. The willow, the vine-leaves, and the Jump-up-and-Kiss-me, want no explanation, except that the last is one of the variety of names, which the fondness of popular admiration, in all countries, has lavished upon the beautiful little tri-coloured violet, commonly called the Heart's-ease*!

It is pleasant to light upon an universal favourite, whose merits answer one's expectation. We know little or nothing of the common flowers among the ancients; but as violets in general have their due mention among the poets that have come down to us, it is to be concluded that the heart's-ease could not miss its particular admiration,—if indeed it existed among

* The crowns, with these explanations, are still not complete. Mr. Campbell, for his naval odes, should have had some oak in his wreath; and it is a great piece of injustice to Mr. Moore's to have left out the shamrock.

than in its perfection. The modern Latin name for it is *Ros Jovis* or Jove's Flower,—an appellation rather too worshipful for its little sparkling delicacy, and more suitable to the greatness of an hydrangia or to the diadems of a rhododendron.

Quæque per irriguas quærenda Sisymbria valles
 Crescunt, nectendis cum myrto nata coronis;
 Flosque Jovis varius, folii tricoloris, et ipsi
 Par violæ, nulloque tamen spectatus odore.

Rapini Hortorum, lib. 1.

With all the beauties in the vallies bred,
 Wild Mint, that's born with myrtle crowns to wed,
 And Jove's own Flow'r, that shares the violet's pride,
 It's want of scent with triple charm supplied.

The name given it by the Italians is *Flammola*, the Little Flame;—at least, this is an appellation with which I have met, and it is quite in the taste of that ardent people. The French are perfectly *aimable* with theirs:—they call it *Pensee*, a Thought, from which comes our word Pansy:—

“There's rosemary,” says poor Ophelia; “that's for remembrance;—pray you, love, remember;—and there is pansies,—that's for thoughts.” Dray-

ten, in his world of luxuries, the Muse's
 where he fairly stiles you with sweets, in
 under this name of it, a very brilliant imag-
 effect in a wreath of flowers :—the nymph

Here damask roses, white and red,
 Out of my lap first take I,
 Which still shall run along the thread;
 My chiefest flow'r this make I.
 Amongst these roses in a row,
 Next place I pinks in plenty,
 These double-daisies then for show;
 And will not this be dainty?
 The pretty Pansy then I'll tye,
Like stones some chain enchasing;
 The next to them, their near ally,
 The purple violet placing.

Nymphs

Milton, in his fine way, gives us a picture in

————— the Pansy *freak'd* with jet.

Another of it's names is *Love-in-idleness*, and
 it has been again celebrated by Shakspeare;
 we must always return, for any thing and
 thing ;—his fairies make potent use of it in
 summer-Nights' Dream. The whole passa-
 of such exquisite fancies, mixed with su-

expressions and fine suggestions of sentiment, that I will indulge myself and lay it before the reader at once, that he may not interrupt himself in his chair:—

OBERON. My gentle Puck, come hither:—thou rememberest,
 Since once I sat upon a promontory,
 And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,
 Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
 That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
 And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
 To hear the sea-maids music?

Puck.

I remember.

OBERON. That very time I saw (but thou could'st not)
 Flying betwixt the cold earth and the moon,
 Cupid all arm'd:—a certain aim he took
 At a fair vestal, throned by the west,
 And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
 As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
 Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon;
 And the imperial votaress pass'd on,
 In maiden meditation, fancy free.
 Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:—
 It fell upon a little western flower,—
 Before, milk-white,—now purple with love's wound,—
 And maidens call it *Love-in-idleness*.
 Fetch me that flow'r,—the herb I shew'd thee once:
 The juice of it, on sleeping eyelids laid,
 Will make or man or woman madly dote

Upon the next live creature that it sees,
Fetch me that herb; and be thou here again,
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

PUCK. I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes.

Act 2. So. 2.

Besides these names of *Love-in-idleness*,
Heart's-ease, and *Jump-up-and-kiss-me*, the tri-
ed violet is called also, in various country plac-
herb *Trinity*, *Three-faces-under-a-hood*, *Kiss-*
hind-the-garden-gate, and *Cuddle-me-to-you*,
seems to have been altered by some nice appreh-
into the less vivacious request of *Cull-me-to-y-*
In short, the Persians themselves have not a
number of fond appellations for the rose, the
people of Europe for the Heart's-ease. For me
to whom gaiety and companionship are mor-
ordinarily welcome on many accounts, I can
speak with gratitude of this little flower,—
many with which fair and dear friends have a
my prison-house, and the one which outlasts
the rest.

*The wines were all nectar of different smack,
To which Muskat was nothing, nor Virginis Lac,
No, nor Lachryma Christi, though clearly divine,
Nor Montepulciano, though King of all Wine.*

I do not profess to have tasted these foreign luxuries, except in the poetry of their admirers. *Virginis Lac* and *Lachryma Christi*,—*Virgin's Milk* and *Christ's Tears*,—are names given to two favourite wines by the pious Italians, whose familiarity with the objects of their devotion is as well known as it is natural. The former seems to be a white wine,—the latter is of a deep red. Muskat, or Moscadell, is so called from the odour of it's grape. The two latter are mentioned among other Tuscan and Neapolitan wines by Redi in his *Bacco in Toscana*; but his favourite is Montepulciano, which at the conclusion and climax of the poem, is pronounced by Bacchus himself, in his hour of transport, to be the sovereign liquor:—

Onde ognun, che di Lileo
Riprende il nome adora,
Ascolti questo altissimo decreto,
Che Bassareo pronunzia, e gli dia fe,
Montepulciano d' ogni Vino è il Re.

Then all that bow down to the god,
Of the care-killing, vintager God,
Give ear and give faith to his edict divine,
That *Montepulciano's the King of all Wines*.

²⁶ I mustn't forget though, that Bob, like a gander,
Would give a "great genius,"—one Mr. Landor,—

Mr. Walter Savage Landor, a very worthy person I believe, and author of an epic piece of gossiping called Gebir, upon the strength of which Mr. Southey dedicated to him his Curse of Kehama. There is really one good passage in Gebir about a sea-shell, and the author is one of those dealers in eccentric obscurity, who might promise to become something if they were boys; but these gentlemen have now been full grown for some time, and are equally too old and too stubborn to alter. I forbear to rake up the political allusions in a poem which nobody knows, and shall say as little about those in Mr. Southey's Joan of Arc, &c. but they are such as should make the Laureat and his friends cautious how they represented other people's opinions and dealt about epithets of indignity.

and Walter look'd up too, and begg'd to propose
 particular friend of his,—one Mr. Rose.

Mr. William Stewart Rose, a son of the Right
 honorable George Rose, and an intelligent man,
 no poet. He is author of some gentlemanly,
 anon-place versions of old romances, which Mr.
 Walter Scott describes as stories “well told” in mo-
 derate verse.

For poets, he said, ‘who would cherish their powers,
 hop’d to be deathless, must keep to good hours.’

This is a truism, which in a luxurious state of so-
 ciety, it may not be unnecessary to repeat. At such
 times, poets are more in request than ever, and being
 persons who can enjoy as well as contribute to
 amusement, are more than ever liable to be spoilt.
 It was a more vulgar mistake than that a true
 genius for poetry can do without study,—meaning by
 study, a careful research into every thing, books as
 well as men. A genius for poetry is nothing but a
 readiness to impressions; but what matters the
 quantity, if we do not put ourselves in the way of the

thoughts and feelings that are to impress us. We must look about for things, if we would acquire their images; we must amass a knowledge of words, if we would explain the images to others. Study, of course, without genius will not make a poet, any more than eyes without sight will get any thing by poring over a microscope; but on the other hand, a poet without study shall be in the situation of Pizarro at the Peruvian Court;—with all his powers he shall not be able to write, and his common soldiers shall get the better of him in consequence. From Dryden downwards, our poets do not appear to have been very studious men, with the exception of Collins and Gray; and the reading of Dryden himself perhaps was rather critical and particular, than general and greedy of knowledge. Of the two others, Collins unluckily had a fortune left him, which threw him back into idleness; and Gray (with all due respect to his *Elegy*) was rather a man of great taste and reading, than an original genius. Of the

It would be curious to ascertain, how much would be due to Gray, after a diligent inspection of his obligations to the

afflictions disposition of all our greatest poets we have complete evidence: Chaucer's eagle in the House of Fame accuses him of being so desperate a student, that he takes no heed of any body, and reads till he looks stupid;—

No tidinges comin to the,
 Not of thy very neighbouria
 That dwellen almost at thy doris;
 Thou herist neither that ne this,
 For when thy labour al done is,
 And hast made al thy reckiniges,
 In stede of reste and of newe thinges
 Thou goest home to thine house anone,
 And al so dombe as any stone
 Thou sittest at anothir boke,
 Thy fully daisid is thy luke.

v. 140.

Chaucer, however was too true a poet not to read nature as well as books, as his writings abundantly testify, both in character and description. Milton and Spenser were both men of learning, and what is Greek and Italian poets. I doubt whether fifty lines, if so much,—setting aside his Long Story and one or two little humorous pieces. He seems to have had a talent for ridicule; and must be allowed, on all hands, to have been a splendid imitator of the sublime.

man for poets, men of business; and so indeed was Chaucer. Shakespeare was neither a man of learning nor business; but not to mention, that Nature in him seems to have been vocal, and rather to have spoken by him than from him, it is clear that he read every thing that he came near, and perhaps the more because he had no learning; for learning is apt to make a man doat upon old books; and the most accomplished readers, not being so apt at a dead language as at their own, linger and brood over their favourite classic, at the expense of many a work of information.

But these names are leading me from my purpose, which was rather to remind the poet of the general than the particular use of his hours; and here I might be seduced to return to them, for Chaucer revels in morning scenery, and Milton, in one of those prose passages of his so impregnated with his poetical spirit, has expressly told us that he was an early riser.* But I must fairly put my books off

the table, lest in being tempted to make a comparison of the reader in all my favourite passages, I should convert these notes into what they really were not intended to be.—The summary of advice to be given to a young poet on the present occasion, is this,—that although it is a main part of his business to mingle with society, for the right apprehension of their manners and passions, and indeed for his own refreshment and enjoyment, yet he should not so mingle with it as to get hurt by it's pressure, or so as to have his attention distracted by it's noise or diverted by it's seductions. Study should be his business, and society his relaxation, not vice versa; he should divide the one between the fields and his books, and the other between society in general, and that sort of friendly or domestic company, which cherishes his kindly affections, and enables him to keep in harmony with the fellow-creatures whom he is to please and to instruct; for a mere intimacy with what is called the world, not only serves to injure the finer simplicity of youth, which properly improved, becomes the noblest wisdom of age, but by

leading him into not the best company and dually fatiguing him with mankind, inclines him care little for pleasing and absolutely to despise instructing; till at last he either looks up things around him with a resentful melancholy settles into that contemptuous indifference and still more fatal to poetry. Dr. Young, we see, a life of courtliness and flattery, revenged on his expectations by the hypochondriacal *Night Thoughts*:—Rochester, amidst a recondidleness and debauchery, vented his disdainful man nature in sallies of ribaldry and starts a very bitterest satire. There is undoubtedly a medium with these men of the world, in which may find ordinary writers of satire, of occasion and of *vers de société*,—but these are not the poets in question,—they are not the spoilable men of fact, they are not poets.

The application of these remarks is intended as general as it appears. If Mr. Moore living as he used to do, in the thick of the gay, might avail myself perhaps of the social and

character of his writings to recommend them; but he has taken wing, it seems, to a rural quest. Indeed, it should gratify Mr. Wordsworth to see how very patriarchal most of our poets present, in this instance. Mr. Moore dates from home in Derbyshire; Mr. Campbell from Sydenham; Mr. Scott from Rattrick Forest; Mr. Southey from Grasmere. Mr. Moore, it is true, is understood to have been an industrious man, at the time he was used to be idlest; but the industry of a town and that of a due intermixture of town and country, are very different things. The former is better than an escape from bustle, with the noise still ringing about your head; it is a series of snatches and make-times; and the only ones that can be barred against interruption, are those which are stolen from health. Besides, one's mind on these occasions is apt to recompense itself a great deal, and the abstinence of the night dips itself too largely out of the day. I remember when I was a lad, hanging loosely on social visits without a prospect and almost without a hope,

except that of leaving behind me the promise of something poetical (all that I shall now perhaps be able to do). I used to think it a fine, studious thing to sit up all night reading and writing, with thinking silence about me, and a pot of coffee at the fire-side; but I found out, on a sudden, that I was in the habit of rewarding my lucubrations with proportionate enjoyment of repose, and that I seldom got out of bed till two or three in the afternoon. For an admirer of the fields and the sunshine, this would not do;—but I have never since been able to get a proper mastery over the irregular habits which I suffered to dictate to me at that time of life, though by God's blessing I hope to achieve it before I have done.

If there is any living poet, whom from his situation in life, from his early genius, and from the complexion of his writings, a cordial observer might venture to remind of these matters, it is a young nobleman who has been lately rising into celebrity and who, as far as the world is concerned, is now swimming in the very thick of the lustre. Early his

own master, and of an elevated rank, Lord Byron has his disadvantages as well as advantages, of no ordinary description. If, on the one hand, he came easily and ardently into the world, with none of the usual obstructions of fortune, and with a readiness on the part of society to admire what he should do; on the other, his entrance might have been too easy, or his expectations too ardent; enjoyments might have pressed around him too quickly to give him time for choice, and too unreservedly to leave him a sense of respect; and at last, with a genius calculated to adorn as well as interest the circles in which he moved, he might find it difficult to escape from a round of pleasurable business, in which the self-love of others as well as his own habitual acquiescence would help to detain him. Perhaps I am assuming too much here, in more senses than one; and I confess, that I have been chiefly led into my conclusions respecting him by the general effect of rank and fortune at his time of life, and by the general turn of mind evinced in his poetry; but if I am induced to say more than I should have done to a writer of

has promised, it is for two reasons,—first, because having to speak of him in these notes as a poet who has come before the public since the verses were first written, I knew of no better place in which to mention him,—and second,—if his lordship will allow me to say so,—because I feel a more than ordinary interest in his fame, and have had some chords about me so touched by his poetry, as to speak whether I will or not.

The advice then, which I would venture to give his lordship,—and which, by the way, as an Englishman and a public writer I have other pretences for giving, in one respect,—is briefly this,—that, in the first place, he would habituate his thoughts as much as possible to the company of those recorded spirits and lofty countenances of public virtue, which elevate an Englishman's recollections, and are the true household deities of his country,—or to descend from my epithets, that he would study politics more and appear oftener in Parliament;—secondly, that he would study society, not only in it's existing brilliance or it's departed grandeur, but in those middle walks

of life; where he may find the most cordial sense of his happiness; as well as the soundest concentration of his intelligence;—and thirdly, that though he has done a good deal already, he would consider it as little until he could fully satisfy himself;—or if this be difficult, perhaps impossible,—that he would consider what he has done as too full of promise to warrant his resorting at any time to a common property in style, or his use of such ordinary expectations in composition, as a diligent student of our great poets will be too proud to adopt.—By following the first piece of advice, he would not only serve his country politically, but to continue speaking of him as a poet, might materially enlarge his stock of ideas, and acquire a stronger ambition to serve it poetically;—by following the second, he might be induced to look a little more to the useful as well as the beautiful in writing, and be diverted from that tendency to view men and things on the dark side, which generally proceeds from a want of acquaintance with the truly bright one;—lastly, by following the third, he would do justice to his real

turn for original feeling and thinking, and enabled worthily to perform what he abundantly misuses.

Lord Byron will see; that by speaking the promise rather than his performance, I estimate good sense, as well as his poetry, at no vulgar rate. Had I rated him less, I might have rated him more; at least, I might have said not all this to one whom I should have considered arrived at his full growth. But though his ship has done more in his youth than many established writer in his full manhood, and he has frequently taken his place, beyond a doubt, in the list of English Poets, yet I would not measure what he could do at five-and-thirty by what he has done at five-and-twenty, than I would consult his opinion of me, as an honest and impartial critic, determined, when that period arrives, to retrospect to unqualified commendation at present. The characteristics of Lord Byron's poetry are a general vein of melancholy,—a fondness for suggesting, and passionate modes of speech

an intensity of feeling, which appears to seek relief in it's own violence. Every thing under his operation assumes the fierce glow of metal under the hands of the forger : — he produces it with unintermitting impatience, and turns, fashions, and dismisses it with an air of resentment. What he wants in style, and what he may clearly obtain, is a regular reliance on his own mode of speaking, without resorting, in his quieter moments, to phrases of common property :—what he wants in essential poetry, is fancy as distinguished from passion,—Spenser as distinguished from Otway ; and it may be anticipated perhaps from this, that he will always be rather on the reflecting and passionate side of poets, than on the fanciful and creative.

The Childe Harold was very striking in this respect, and evinced a singular independence and determination of thinking, with little of those fancies, original or borrowed, which are so captivating to young writers in general. The Giaour* and Bride

* The country gentlemen have been terribly baffled with the titles of Lord Byron's productions. Childe Harold and

of Abydos are two sketches of passion, sparkling and dignified, and abounding in felicitous instances of

ciently astounded them; Abydos, after much dispute, was luckily to be found in a dictionary; but as to the *Giaour*, he was like his namesake in Caliph Vathek, as inexplicable as he was attractive; there was no circumventing him and his four vowels. For this, in some measure, we have to thank the French, who, to suit their own convenience, make as much havoc with people's names as they do with the rest of their property. Thus, after having been used to their mode of writing the names in the Arabian Nights, and having grown in love, while we are boys, with the generosity and magnificence of the Vizier Guy-afar (Giafar), we find among the melancholy realities of our manhood that we are to call him Jaffer;—the family name of the Bedreddins is suddenly rectified into Buddir-ad-Deen; and our old, though somewhat alarming friends, Haroun al Raschid and the Cadi are discovered to be Haroon al Rusheed and the Cauzee.—See some of these alterations in Dr. Scott's new edition of that ever delightful work. One day or other we shall find our mysterious acquaintance the G-i-a-o-u-r under the plain-spoken name of the Jower. It is needless to add, that the best way of settling this matter is to write all names as nearly as possible to their original spelling. It is our business to find out the pronunciation by itself; but a name is nothing but one particular sound, by which one individual is distinguished from another, and the French might as well call Pythagoras Peter Jenkins as Peet-a-gore (Pythagore). It would have been laudable in Dr. Scott, while he was about his anti-gallican emendations, to render the word *Genie*, which has almost become naturalized, by its proper translation of *Genius*.

ession. They are not free however from commonplace verses, and are disfigured besides by a number of strange exotic rhymes, consisting of abstruse Turkish,—which is really unfair. Of all his productions, I confess I am still most taken with the little effusions at the end of the *Childe Harold*. It is here, I think, that the soul of him is found, and that he has most given himself up to the natural words and native impressions, which is the truest test of poetry. His lordship has evidently suffered as well as thought, and therefore we are at right to demand originality of him. Perhaps it may not have struck him, that a resolution to exhaust the most of his past feelings and reflections for the multiplication of his poetical resources, and their frequent use to society, is no mean or mechanical process, and may be called the philosopher's stone of poetry. It is thus that we become masters of our art, and gain possession of a talisman, which will make even the most appalling spirits wait upon our wants and administer to our usefulness.

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**CATULLUS'S RETURN HOME TO THE
PENINSULA OF SIRMIO.**

CARMEN XXXI.

O BEST of all the scatter'd spots that lie
In sea or lake,—apple of landscape's eye,—
How gladly do I drop within thy nest,
With what a sigh of full, contented rest,

PENINSULARUM, Sirmio, insularumque
Ocelle, quascunque in liquentibus stagnis
Marique vasto fert uterque Neptunus,
Quam te libenter, quamque lætus inviso,

**ACME AND SEPTIMIUS, OR THE
ENTIRE AFFECTION.**

FROM CATULLUS.—CARMEN XLV.

' Oh, Acme love !' Septimius cried,
As on his lap he held his bride,—
' If all my heart is not for thee,
And doats not on thee desperately,
And if it doat not more and more,
As desperate heart ne'er did before,

ACMEN Septimius, suos amores,
Tenens in gremio, ' Mea,' inquit, ' Acme,
Ni te perdit amo, atque amare porro
Omnes sum assidue paratus annos,
Quantum qui pote plurimum perire,

May I be doom'd, on desert ground,
To meet the lion in his round * !'

He said; and Love, on tiptoe near him,
Kind at last, and come to cheer him†,
Clapp'd his little hands to hear him.

* The ancients believed, that perjured persons were particularly liable to encounter wild beasts,

† It has been supposed, that the passage here, which is rather obscurely expressed in the original, at least to modern apprehensions, alludes to some difficulties, with which the lovers had met, and which had hitherto prevented their union.

Solus in Libya, Indiave tosta,
Cæsio veniam obuius leoni.'

Hoc ut dixit, Amor, sinistram ut ante,
Dextram sternuit, approbationem.

But Acme to the bending youth
 Just dropping back that rosy mouth,
 Kiss'd his reeling, hovering eyes,
 And 'O my life, my love!' replies,
 'So may our constant service be
 To this one only Deity,
 As with a transport doubly true
 He thrills your Acme's being through!'

She said; and Love, on tiptoe near her,
 Kind at last, and come to cheer her,
 Clapp'd his little hands to hear her.

At Acme, leviter caput reflectens,
 Et dulcis pueri ebrios ocellos
 Illo purpureo ore suaviata,
 'Sic,' inquit, 'mea vita, Septimille,
 Huic uno domino usque serviamus,
 Ut multa mihi major acriorque
 Ignis mollibus ardet in medullis.

Hoc ut dixit, Amor sinistram ut ante,
 Dextram sternuit approbationem.

Favour'd thus by heav'n above,
Their lives are one return of love;
For he, poor fellow, so possessed,
Is richer than with East and West,—
And she, in her enamour'd boy,
Finds all that she can frame of joy.

Now who has seen, in Love's subjection,
Two more blest in their connection,
Or a more entire affection?

Nunc ab auspicio bono profecti,
Mutuis animis amant, amanter.
Unam Septimius misellus Acmen
Mavolt quam Syrias Britanniasque;
Uno in Septimio fidelis Acme
Facit delicias libidinesque.

Quis ullos homines beatiore
Vidit? Quis Venerem auspiciorem?

HORACE TO PYRRHA.

ODE V. LIB. I.

PYRRHA, what ardent stripling now,

In one of thy embower'd retreats,

Would press thee to indulge his vow

Amidst a world of flow'rs and sweets?

For whom are bound thy tresses bright

With unconcern so exquisite?

Alas, how oft shall he bewail

His fickle stars and faithless gale,

QUIS multa gracilis te puer in rosa

Perfusus liquidis urget odoribus

Grato, Pyrrha, sub antro?

Cui flavam religas comam

Simplex munditiis? Heu, quoties fidem

Mutatosque deos flebit, et aspera

And stare with unaccustom'd eyes,
When the black winds and waters rise,
Though now the sunshine hour beguiles
His bark along thy golden smiles,
Trusting to see thee, for his play,
For ever keep smooth holiday !
Poor dazzled fools, who bask beside thee,
And trust because they never tried thee !
For me, and for my dangers past,
The grateful picture hangs at last

Nigris æquora ventis

Emirabitur insolens,

Qui nunc te fruitur credulus aurea,

Qui semper vacuum, semper amabilem

Sperat, nescius auræ

Fallacis ! Miseri quibus

Intentata nites ! Me tabula sacer

Votiva paries indicat uvida

Within the mighty Neptune's fane,
Who snatch'd me, dripping, from the main.

Suspendisse potenti
Vestimenta maris deo.

**PART OF A CHORUS IN
SENECA'S TRAGEDY OF THYESTES.**

'Tis not wealth that makes a king,
Nor the purple's colouring,
Nor a brow that's bound with gold,
Nor gates on mighty hinges rolled.

The king is he, who void of fear,
Looks abroad with bosom clear;

REGEM non faciunt opes,
Non vestis Tyriæ color,
Non frontis nota regiæ,
Non auro nitidæ fores.

Rex est, qui posuit metus,
Et diri mala pectoris;

Who can tread ambition down,
Nor be sway'd by smile or frown;
Nor for all the treasure cares,
That mine conceals, or harvest wears,
Or that golden sands deliver,
Bosom'd in a glassy river.

What shall move his placid might?
Not the headlong thunderlight,

Quem non ambitio impotens,
Et nunquam stabilis favor
Vulgi præcipitis movet.
Non quidquid fodit occidens;
Aut unda Tagus aurea
Claro devehit alveo;
Non quidquid Libycis terit
Fervens area messibus.

Quem non concutiet cadens
Obliqui via fulminis,

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Nor the storm that rushes out
To snatch the shivering waves about,
Nor all the shapes of slaughter's trade
With forward lance or fiery blade.
Safe with wisdom for his crown,
He looks on all things calmly down;
He welcomes fate, when fate is near,
Nor taints his dying breath with fear.

Grant that all the kings assemble,
At whose tread the Scythians tremble,—

Non Euris rapiens mare,
Aut sævo rabidus freto
Ventosi tumor Adriæ;
Quem non lancea militis,
Non strictus domuit chalybs;
Qui tuto positus loco,
Infra se vidit omnia;
Occurritque suo libens
Fato, nec queritur mori.

Reges convenient licet,
Qui sparsos agitant Dahas,—

Grant that in the train be they,
Whom the Red-Sea shores obey,
Where the gems and chrystal caves
Sparkle up through purple waves;
Bring with these the Caspian stout,
Who scorns to shut th' invader out,
And the daring race that tread
The rocking of the Danube's bed,
With those again, where'er they be,
Who, lapp'd in silken luxury,

Qui rubri vada litoris,
Et gemmis mare lucidum
Late sanguineum tenent;
Aut qui Caspia fortibus
Recludunt juga Sarmatis;
Certet, Danubii vadum
Audet qui pedes ingredi;
Et quocunque loco jacent

Feed, to the full, their lordly will;—
The noble mind is monarch still.

No need has he of vulgar force,
Armour, or arms, or chested horse,
Nor all the idle darts that light
From Parthian in his feigned flight,
Nor whirling rocks from engines thrown,
That come to shake old cities down.

Seres vellere nobiles;—
Mens regnum bona possidet.

Nil ullis opus est equis,
Nil armis, et inertibus
Telis, quæ procul ingerit
Parthus, cum simulat fugas;
Admotis nihil est opus
Urbes sternere machinis
Longe saxa rotantibus.

No—to fear not earthly thing,
This it is that makes the king;
And all of us, whoe'er we be,
May carve us out this royalty.

Rex est, qui metuit nihil;
Hoc regnum sibi quisque dat

BACCHUS, OR THE PIRATES.

FROM HOMER.—HYMN V.

OF Bacchus let me tell a sparkling story.—

Tw^{as} by the sea-side, on a promontory,
As like a blooming youth he sat one day,
His dark locks ripening in the sunny ray,
And wrapt in a loose cloak of crimson bright,
Which half gave out his shoulders, broad and white,
That making up, a ship appear'd at sea,
Brushing the wine-black billows merrily,—
A Tuscan trim, and pirates were the crew;
A fatal impulse drove them as they flew;
For looking hard, and nodding to each other,
Concluding him, at least, some prince's brother,
They issued forth along the breezy bay,
Seiz'd him with jovial hearts, and bore away.

No sooner were they off, than gath'ring round him
They mark'd his lovely strength, and would have bou
When lo, instead of this, the ponderous bands [hi
Snapp'd of themselves from off his legs and hands,
He, all the while; discovering no surprise,
But keeping, as before, his calm black eyes.

At this, the Master, struck beyond the rest,
Drew them aside, and earnestly address'd;—
' O wretched as ye are, have ye your brains,
And see this being ye would hold with chains?
Trust me, the ship will not sustain him long;
For either Jove he is, terribly strong,
Or Neptune, or the silver-shafted King,
But nothing, sure, resembling mortal thing.
Land then and set him free, lest by and by
He call the winds about him; and we die.

He said; and thus, in bitterness of heart
The Captain answer'd,—' Wretched that *thou* art!
Truly we've much to fear,—a favouring gale,
And all things firm behind the running sail!

Stick to thy post, and leave these things to men.
I trust, my friends, before we sail again,
To touch at Ægypt, Cyprus, or the north,
And having learnt meantime our prisoner's worth,
What friends he has, and wealth to what amount,
To turn this god-send to a right account.'

He said ; and hauling up the sail and mast,
Drew the tight vessel stiff before the blast ;
The sailors, under arms, observe their prize,
When lo, strange doings interrupt their eyes ;
For first, a fountain of sweet-smelling wine
Came gushing o'er the deck with sprightly shine ;
And odours, not of earth, their senses took ;
The pallid wonder spread from look to look ;
And then a vine-tree over-ran the sail,
It's green arms tossing to the pranksome gale ;
And then an ivy, with a flowering shoot,
Ran up the mast in rings, and kiss'd the fruit,
Which here and there the dipping vine let down ;
On every oar there was a garland crown.—

But now the crew call'd out 'To shore! To shore!'

When leaping backward with an angry roar,

The dreadful stranger to a lion turn'd;

His glaring eyes beneath the hatches burn'd:

Then rushing forward, he became a bear,

With fearful change bewildering their despair;

And then again a lion, ramping high

From seat to seat, and looking horribly.

Heap'd at the stern, and scrambling all along,

The trembling wretches round the Master throng,

Who calmly stood, for he had done no wrong.

Oh, at that minute, to be safe on land!

But now, in his own shape, the God's at hand,

And spurning first the Captain from the side,

The rest leap'd after in the plunging tide;

For one and all, as they had done the same,

The same deserv'd; and dolphins they became.

The God then turning to the Master, broke

In happy-making smiles, and stoutly spoke:—

Be of good courage, blest companion mine;
Bacchus am I, the roaring God of Wine;
And well shall this day be, for thee and thine.

And so, all reverence and all joy to thee,
Son of the sparkle-smiling Semele!
Must never bard forget thee in his song,
Who mak'st it flow so sweetly and so strong.

TO T—— B——, ESQ.

WRITTEN FROM HAMPSTEAD.

DEAR B., whose native taste, solid and clear,
The throng of life has strengthen'd without harm,
You know the rural feeling, and the charm
That stillness has for a world-fretted ear :—
'Tis now deep whisp'ring all about me here
With thousand tiny hushings, like the swarm
Of atom bees, or fairies in alarm,
Or noise of numerous bliss from distant sphere.

This charm our evening hours duly restore,—
Nought heard through all our little, lull'd abode,
Save the crisp fire, or leaf of book turn'd o'er,
Or watch-dog, or the ring of frosty road.
Wants there no other sound then?—Yes, one more,—
The voice of friendly visiting, long owed.

C. H. Reynell, Piccadilly, London.

HM









